Jewish Supremacy in France

Part I
The Origins (1789-1791)

by
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Translator's Preface

Édouard Lehmann (1836-1915) and his twin brother Achille (1836-1909) were born racial Jews in the city of Lyon on the 18th of February, 1836. Their family was prosperous and influential; they enjoyed the status of a privileged community in one of the world's greatest states. An unexpected calamity occurred when, upon reaching the age of eighteen, the twins fled from the Jewish community and converted to Catholicism. Édouard took the baptismal name Joseph, Achille became Augustin, and they Francized their surname as Lémann. The brothers entered seminary and were ordained priests in 1860.

The brothers were prolific authors on historical and religious topics, especially regarding the historical situation of the Jews. Pius

In addition to their priestly duties, they organized charity work such as orphanages and religious houses for women. Their primary historical significance sits on

Author's Dedication

I

We've not come to call attention to Jewish supremacy, for this is no longer necessary. Still less have we come to advocate for it, as it is an evil. We have come, however, to explain it.

We know vaguely that it originated in the French Revolution, but we don't know the circumstances and events of its genesis. This book recounts the story.

It is a birth certificate that we take the liberty of passing before the eyes of M. Sadi Carnot, the current President of the French Republic, before the eyes of the National Assembly, which recently emerged from the *comitia* of September 1889, and before the eyes of the Members of these loyal Provincial Assemblies, who, from one end of France to the other, have brought together old and new things in a beautiful patriotic synthesis.

The tribute is addressed first to M. Sadi Carnot, because the father of Monsieur President of the Republic wrote the life of the man who was the main agent of Jewish emancipation at the Constituent Assembly, of the priest-deputy Grégoire.[1] The biographer has stood near to the truth, rather than in the truth itself. Better informed by these pages, which solicit the honor of being read, the Head of

1 *Henri Grégoire*, by Hippolyte Carnot (*librairie centrale des publications populaires*).

State will perhaps judge it opportune to preserve the Elysée Palace from the Hebraic influence bequeathed to him by his father's house.[2]

Next, in our tribute, we name the National Assembly that emerged from the September 1889 *comitia*, because it is reminiscent, both in name and date, of the first French assembly to bear the burden of dealing with the Jewish Question for the first time. Once you've read this book, the expression won't seem too strong. From 1789 to 1791, the National Assembly, and after it the Constituent Assembly, had nightmares about this question. In the event that the National Assembly of 1889 were to be seized again by this matter during its current legislature (which would by no means be impossible), it remains to be seen whether it would resign itself to the hesitations and perplexities of its predecessor, and whether, in the end, it would capitulate, as it once did, to the Jews.

Could we have forgotten, in our tribute, the members of the Provincial Assemblies of this centenary? Taking up, with admirable breadth of vision and precision, all the questions contained in the

2 It was [Hippolyte Carnot,] the father of M. [Sadi] Carnot who, in the session of May 28, 1851, brought to the floor of the Chamber of Deputies the question of the emancipation of Israelites to be obtained in the other countries of Europe, by the care of France. M. Guizot was then Minister of Foreign Affairs. Two great names of France, two members of the Chamber of Deputies, associated themselves with M. Carnot's proposal: MM. de Beaumont and de La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt. Here are a few excerpts from M. Carnot's speech: "*The emancipation of the Jews is an entirely French matter: it was a French Catholic priest, whose name will be eternally honored by the friends of liberty, the pious and venerable Grégoire, who had this thought realized by the Constituent Assembly; we would be failing in our duties if his generous legacy were to remain sterile in our hands... The hope of revising the legislation of other countries concerning the Jews would be quite likely to encourage us, and this is not, I like to think, what our government would call an illegitimate intervention... France began by setting an example; today it has the right to remind Germany that, while all humanity owes reparations to the people of Moses for so many centuries of humiliation and barbarism, Germany in particular has been one of its principal debtors in its own history*." The Israelites' gratitude to the Carnot family dates from this period (for further details, see the *Moniteur* of May 28, 1841, and the *Archives Israélites*, year 1841, pp. 345-361).

Cahiers of 1789,[3] they deliberated on the Israelite question only with an extreme reservation, solely in relation to hoarding and financial speculation.[4] They lacked the authentic documents to judge contemporary Jewry on other points. Please allow us to present these documents to them: they may prove useful, should the reins of power return to their hands. The noble and measured terms they used with regard to the Israelites, in their recent and all-too-short deliberation,[5] prove that they would know how to combat and ward off the Semitic peril by not harming these two holy things: the glories of the ancient people of God, and the trend of conversions to Catholicism.

3 Translator's note: a set of grievances put forward by supplicants, agitators, and revolutionists.

4 Vow of the General Assembly of provincial delegates held in Paris:

1) That agiotage, immoral speculation and coalitions tending to bring about the fictitious rise or fall of products of all kinds, but especially foodstuffs, be severely punished by law;

2) That the authorities, inspired solely by the national interest, endeavor to remove from the Jewish banks all influence over the State's financial operations, loans and markets.

5 Here, in effect, is the language used by Count de Nicolay at the general meeting of provincial delegates in Paris:

"The Commission recognized that, respectable in itself - for in the midst of universal indifference the Jewish nation has managed to preserve its faith, its morals and the invincible hope of the recovery of its altars - it is no less formidable for Christian society, because, camped rather than established in the midst of the nations, it professes and practises there, to our detriment, economic principles opposed to the principles of Christian morality, economic principles which it itself regards as so reprehensible that, while seeking to benefit from them in its relations with Christian nations, it is careful not to apply them at home.

"Consequently, the Commission believes that as long as Jesus Christ has not enlightened with his divine light these intelligences, so well made however to know him and to work to spread the glory of his name, it is necessary that all men concerned with our ancient reputation of honor and French probity repudiate highly the disastrous economic principles and regrettable financial practices that the Jewish nation has spread among us, and avoid those strange compromises and too frequent relationships whose danger too recent catastrophes have shown us abundantly."

II

It is a birth certificate, as we have said, that we place before eyes capable of appreciating it.

The birth certificate, in fact, can be written as follows:

JEWISH SUPREMACY

Is born of the Rights of Man and dechristianized France, in the premises of the National Assembly: from August 14, 1789 to September 27, 1791, the duration of this laborious birth.

Once revealed, this preponderance will grow. Its development will be the subject of subsequent studies. Let's take a look at an apologue grafted onto a historical word to illustrate its prodigious growth:

"*The Revolution will tour the world*," announced Mirabeau one day. Keeping his word, the Revolution set out on its journey;

Right at the start of its gigantic tour, it was approached by a singular companion: the Jew-errant. They look at each other and say: let's unite.

"I'm starting the world tour," adds Revolution, with youthful eagerness.

"— I've been doing it for eighteen centuries," replies the Wandering Jew, "I'll guide you!..."

Since then, all continents and all peoples have seen them pass together.

This apologue is enough to make us understand the rapid growth which was manifested in the Jewish supremacy.

Obviously, the Jews had everything to gain in the company of the Revolution. They no longer had to argue with governments for their livelihood, as they had in the past: the Revolution argued on their behalf. They will no longer fight as they did in the Middle Ages: the Revolution fights for them. All they have to do is let their young, savage ally do as she pleases, only stirring her up when she doesn't advance fast enough on their side: march, march!

At the time we are writing this preface, Jewish preponderance (to speak only of its development in France) is energetically described in these reflections from the newspaper *l'Univers*, in connection with the circular from the Chief Rabbi of Paris on the centenary of 1789:[6]

"Aren't the Jews at home in France? They've only been there for a hundred years, and already they've half conquered it. Soon it will be all theirs. Don't they own the land, the money, the influence? Don't they have the government and the press? At present, M. de Rothschild and his co-religionists are more masters in France than the President of the Republic and his ministers. They reign at the Stock Exchange, and that palace is the true center of power and action. [7]

What a long way we've come, great God, from the birth certificate presented above, to this stranglehold on the government of France!

But the sons of Israel have themselves erected the wooden barrier that subjugates and humiliates all supremacy: the Cross!

It alone can be the salvation of modern society, and their salvation in modern society.

6 In this circular addressed to his co-religionists, dated May 3, M. Zadoc Kahn, Chief Rabbi of Paris, announces that a public thanksgiving service will be held in all French synagogues to mark the Centenary of 1789.

7 *l'Univers*, May 11, 1889

Chapter I
Philosophism's Dangerous Initiative in Opening a Competition in Metz in Favor of the Jews (1785-1788)

I

A painful contrast which, from the revolution of 1789 onwards, will fill the history of the French people and take on ever-increasing proportions: *Christ rejected and the Jews admitted into society.*

Two facts of incalculable gravity were juxtaposed at the start of the French Revolution: the dismissal of Christ and the admission of the Jews.

Throughout this book, we have recounted in minute detail the manner in which these two events were brought about and occurred, and will limit ourselves here to presenting their precise formula:

First historical fact: *Christ rejected at the head of the Declaration of the Rights of Man;*

Second historical fact: *Jews admitted to society, by virtue of the same Declaration of Rights.*

These two facts, linked together, recall a painful contrast from the past: the preference given to Barabbas over Jesus; consequently, the exchange of Barabbas for Jesus, since the august son of David belonged, in his own right, to the people of Israel, by his blood, his miracles, his patriotism. They recall this preference, this exchange; alas! they were also to lead the French people into phases of disappointment, decadence and impoverishment, where the Jews were the first to step.

A word about this unfortunate primacy:

The immense clamor: *May his blood fall on us and on our children!* was not, for the Jewish people, the most calamitous episode of the Passion, although it was the most serious. The reason for this is that Christ's blood here on earth excludes no-one from its effluvia of

mercy and tenderness. It purifies, in a dew of love and refreshment, the Jews as well as any other men, as soon as these poor blind men, *remembering the blessed Passion* (sweet and consoling expressions of the Holy Liturgy),[8] consent to benefit from the divine blood. The most calamitous episode of the Passion, a source of ignominy and disaster for the people of Israel, was the preference given to Barabbas over Jesus.

The Righteous One, the benefactor of Judea, is contrasted with an infamous thief and murderer. An indescribable clangor indicates the preference: *Barabbas!* Pilate insists on giving the Jews time to reconsider their choice. With even greater fury, they reply: *Not this one, but Barabbas!* These men, whose exasperation knows no bounds, do not even deign to say Jesus, to pronounce his name, as it seems to them that to pronounce it would defile their mouths; they cry out: THIS ONE! *no, we no longer want him; it is Barabbas we choose!*

The results of the exchange were not long in coming. In the past, Israel was a very noble nation, with a great figure, notwithstanding the faults opposed by Moses and the Prophets. But if, for nineteen centuries, O Israelites of the dispersion, you have the reputation of plunderers and deceivers, if you have been considered people of emptiness and rapine, if the accusation of homicide against Christians has even, at times, been leveled at you, you bear, in this degrading transmission, the consequence of the choice made by your ancestors before Pontius Pilate. Didn't they prefer a thief to the royal son of David? Didn't they prefer false keys to the scepter?...

A preference, not so categorical, perhaps brought about surreptitiously, but no less deplorable, was one day to be displayed in the history of the people of France. It would also involve an exchange. We call it this: *Christ rejected and the Jews admitted into society.* In Judea, the cry was: Grace to Barabbas, death to Christ! In France, the cry was: Christ out, Jews in! The laws were the expression of this gloomy contrast. Laws express the thoughts and wills of a people. If, at one hour in the life of the French people, the same laws have

8 These words are inscribed in the Canon of the Mass. The priest pronounces them immediately after Consecration, in the presence of the precious Blood.

said to Christ: Get out! and to the Jews: Get in! a great misdeed has been committed. The exchange, for France, will be all too real: by taking away Christ, we give her the Jews! What disproportion, O heaven!

Christ rejected from the new social order, while the Jews are admitted: a gloomy and painful contrast, an affront to the Divinity which was not accomplished, as in Jerusalem, in the effervescence of a single morning, but over time, with frightening calm, after a series of events brought about by inexorable logic. This affront was not a criminal *act*, explicit and swift, as was the preference of Barabbas over Jesus; but it was *the consequence* of criminal ideas, of criminal doctrines, given that, since Christianity, people have led themselves only by ideas. The affront and the contrast descended, slowly and gradually, from the gestures of the Constituent Assembly, into the gestures of the country, spread like a dark stain, and now what do all eyes see, willy-nilly? This: Christ loudly rejected everywhere, and the Jews superbly admitted everywhere. For the painful expansion of the contrast, Providence allowed a century!

Among the spectators and victims of the dark tragedy at the end of the last century, perhaps only one, with her intuition as a Christian woman and princess of France, foresaw what was to come: Madame Elisabeth. The day after the Constituent Assembly admitted Jews to all positions, the royal princess wrote to Madame de Bombelles:

> *Yesterday, the Assembly put the last nail in the coffin of all its foolishness and irreligion by giving Jews the right to be admitted to all jobs. I can't tell you how angry I am about this decree. But God has his days of vengeance, and if he suffers evil for a long time, he does not punish it with less force.*[9]

And yet the pious princess saw only part of the truth! She points out, in connection with the irreligion of the Assembly that arouse her anger, the entry of the Jews, but she does not consider the contrast with the dismissal of Christ.

It is this contrast that we are about to highlight.

9 *Correspondance de Marie-Antoinette et de Madame Élisabeth*, by M. Feuillet de Couches -*Archives Israélites*, 1864, page 823.

II

Such a contrast can only be made by such a great people if a poisonous, drowsy beverage has first robbed them of a clear view of what they are about to do. What is this beverage? Revolutionary liberalism.

First and foremost, we asked ourselves this question: How could such a contrast "the dismissal of Christ and the admission of the Jews" have come about in the land of France? It's not in cold blood, when you call yourself France, that you say to Christ: Get out, and to the Jews: Get in. Something must have happened beforehand to disturb the reason of the most enlightened people on earth, the most religious, the most courteous in its forms and the most chivalrous in its ways. In fact, a great cause of trouble prepared this contrast. At the end of the eighteenth century, France was drinking from a drowsy, poisoned cup. A perfidious beverage was beginning to upset her temperament.

What was it?

The Revolution, brilliant, bold, fascinating and terrible like an Athaliah or an Agrippina, was bound, like those ambitious women of ancient times, to proceed with cunning and to stop at nothing. All jobs are good for those consumed by ambition! From the outset, the Revolution has been a poisoner, but with art and skill, recalling and surpassing the schemes of Agrippina and Locusta.

Let's think back for a moment to pagan Rome:

Locusta is a famous poisoner from the time of the Caesars. Her first task was to kill Emperor Claudius, on Agrippina's orders. She is called to the Council, and asked to put some genius into her crucibles: too quick a poison would make Claudius' murder obvious; too slow a poison would give him time to recognize himself, and restore the rights of Britannicus, his son. Locusta understands, and finds something *sought-after in poison, which will confuse reason and only slowly extinguish life.*[10] A eunuch makes the unfortunate Caesar

10 Tacitus, *Annals*, XII, 69. - Suetonius, in *Claudius*, 45 - Champagny, *les Césars*, II, 161, 5.

take the poison in a mushroom, which he savors with delight: he dies dazed!

A year later, Locusta rid Nero of the troublesome Britannicus. This time, she was asked not for a slow, timid, secret poison, like the one she had so exquisitely composed for Claudius, but for an active, swift, devastating poison. Britannicus dropped dead at the imperial table.

Locusta had pupils, and Nero allowed her to train disciples and run a school of poisoning. Indeed, history and painting depict her trying out her venoms on unfortunate slaves, some of whom writhe at her feet, others going mad.[11]

Let's return to our own time.

Who would ever have thought that Locusta could be surpassed? The Revolution has taken charge of this sinister progress.

Indeed, since the appearance of Christianity in the world, everything has taken on a higher, more spiritualized form, even evil, even poisoning. Minds and morals are poisoned in the same way as bodies used to be: with genius! Didn't we say, in the Christian centuries, the poison of heresy, the poison of error? The shadow of Locusta was certainly already haunting the assemblies of Manichaeism, Arianism, Calvinism and Voltairianism; but, at the date of 1789, the Revolution, inspired by the poisoner and eager to surpass her, imagined in the intellectual and social order something *sought-after in terms of poison, which would disturb reason and only slowly extinguish life* among Christian peoples: what, then, did it imagine?

Liberalism.[12]

11 SUETONIUS., in *Nero*., 33. — CHAMPAGNY, *les Césars*, II, 191.

12 Leo XIII's encyclical *On the Nature of Human Liberty* (June 20, 1888) absolutely condemns liberalism. Here's one of the passages that strikes him:

"There are a great many who, following the example of Lucifer, from whom is this criminal word: *I will not serve*, understand by the name of liberty what is pure and absurd license. Such are those who belong to this widespread and powerful school, and who, borrowing their name from the word liberty, wish to be called *liberals*.

"And indeed, just as the proponents of *naturalism* and *rationalism* are in philosophy, so are these proponents of *liberalism* in the moral and civil order, since they introduce into morals and the practice of life the principles laid

Indeed, to succeed in disturbing reason and slowly extinguishing life in a people like France, we need a beverage that is at once poison, potion and narcotic:

Poison kills;

Potion intoxicates;

The narcotic drowses.

All these effects are necessary to overcome the robust constitution of a Christian nation.

The aim is to kill Christian ideas; at the same time, to intoxicate generous souls; at the same time, to put honest people to sleep: all at the same time. Liberalism will be this skillful mixture, this terrible brew. Break it down and you'll find the three elements: poison, potion and narcotic.

Poison first:

Just as poisonous plants are found in the fields, so too are evil doctrines and pernicious opinions found in the intellectual world. No matter how much the Church eradicates them, they reappear with the ease and tenacity of weeds: for example, the denial of original sin; again, the omnipotence of reason, to whose tribunal everything must submit; the sufficiency of human forces to make one's own way; and the sufficiency of social forces to lead peoples. Poisonous by-products of all centuries, they had been considerably propagated by 18TH century philosophism. The Revolution had only to bend down to pick them up. They will form the first ingredient of its terrible brew.

In addition to poison, the potion :

In the treasure trove of human languages, there are words that have the power to arouse, intoxicate and enthrall: the magic words of liberty, fraternity and equality. The Gospel had purified these words, explained them, and, depositing in them a divine ferment, had broadened them so much that they expressed new ideas. As long

down by the proponents of *naturalism*. Now, the principle of all rationalism is the sovereign domination of human reason, which, refusing the obedience due to divine and eternal reason, and claiming to be its own authority, recognizes itself alone as the supreme principle, source and judge of truth. This is the claim of the followers of *liberalism*.

as they had remained attached to the Gospel, they had penetrated and worked the world in a way that was all the more sure and salutary because it was gentle, balanced and respectful. But then, in the eighteenth century, philosophers seized on these words and explained them away. Immediately, they lost their divine ferment and turned to potion.[13] The National Assembly, on the famous night of August 4, 1789 — an intoxication without precedent in the history of peoples — experienced this potion.[14] It was the second element in the enchanting and fatal brew prepared by the Revolution. The narcotic, finally, is a third element.

Among all the sentiments with which the human heart has been endowed, there is one that is distinguished by great nobility when truth is its guide, but which becomes an extreme danger when it is inspired only by itself: it is the sentiment of tolerance, of indulgence. Indeed, when it takes truth as its guide, tolerance translates into compassion for people; but it refuses to recognize errors: compassion for *the person*, disapproval of the *error*, such is the expression

13 According to the divine Book of Revelation, there is a mouth that curses the Lamb and speaks like the Lamb: *Os loquens sicut Agnus*. The Lamb said in the Gospel: Freedom! If Christ delivers you, you will be free. — The cursed mouth repeats: Freedom. — The Lamb said: Brotherhood! You are all brothers: *Omnes vos fratres estis*. — The cursed mouth repeats: Fraternity! — The Lamb said: Equality! You have no masters but one, who is Christ, and those whom Christ has made his vicars in the Church and in the State, *unus est magister vester Christus*. — The cursed mouth repeats: Equality! - Liberté, fraternité, égalité, old words like the Gospel! As heavenly and sweet as their charm is on the lips of the Lamb and his Church, so perfidious and fatal is it when the Spirit of lies pronounces and explains them.

14 M. THIERS recounts the event as follows: "The generosity aroused in some, the pride engaged in others, led to sudden disinterestedness; everyone rushed to the tribune to abdicate their privileges. The nobility set the first example; the clergy, no less eager, hastened to follow. A sort of intoxication seized the Assembly: putting aside superfluous discussion, all orders, all classes, all possessors of prerogatives of any kind, hurried to make their renunciations too. After the deputies of the first orders, those of the communes came in turn to make their offerings. Unable to sacrifice personal privileges, they offered those of the provinces and cities. The response was universal. "(THIERS, *La Révolution*, t. I.)

of Catholic tolerance. On the contrary, when it is inspired only by itself, tolerance, wandering into the softness of beliefs or into a false and exaggerated sensibility, becomes indulgence for errors no less than for people, and recklessly excuses everything: acts of weakness and guilty doctrines. the Church had always carefully linked this sentiment to truth. Philosophy in the eighteenth century detached it from truth. It was then that maxims such as "Tolerance is the mother of peace" took hold in society. — Tolerance alone was able to quench the blood that flowed from one end of Europe to the other. — If God had willed it, all men would have the same religion, as they have the same moral instinct: so be tolerant. This system of tolerance, encouraged and propagated, will be the opium, the narcotic that the Revolution needs. It will use it to put all religious quarrels to sleep, and better still, to put religions themselves to sleep, if possible. A whole host of honest people, good people, will want nothing more than to become numb, to doze off and remain neutral, notwithstanding the severity of theology. Third element of the revolutionary brew! And so:

Omnipotence of reason, to whose tribunal everything must submit; sufficiency of human forces to make its own way, and sufficiency of social forces to lead peoples (poison);

Great words of liberty, equality and fraternity (potion);

Sense of mutual tolerance not only for people, but for doctrines (narcotic);

Such is the perfidious beverage which, as in the time of Locusta, *should cloud reason, and only slowly extinguish life*. Some will be intoxicated, others drowsy, many killed in the long run. This mixture will later receive its characteristic name: liberalism.

III

THE FIRST PUBLIC TEST OF LIBERALISM IN A COMPETITION HELD IN FAVOR OF JEWS IN THE CITY OF METZ, IN 1788.

It was, as is well known, the philosophical preparers of the Revolution who undertook the first *public* trial of the fatal beverage. It did so in relation to the Jewish question.

An important preliminary observation:

Before being transferred to such a public issue as that of the Israelites, the poisons and poppies of the new doctrine were tested *privately* for a long time and, indeed, in great numbers. The sophists, the progeny of philosophism, made a vile profession of poisoning, intoxicating and maddening the noble people of France.

It's worth pointing out that the philosopher worthy of the name has nothing in common with the sophist: the former seeks to know or make known the truth; the latter seeks only to disfigure or obscure it through false subtlety. The word sophist means, according to Greek etymology, *a deceiver in subtle and insidious reasoning*. Doesn't this sound like a man who prepares and infiltrates the thoughts of others with subtle poison? Plato, in one of his admirable dialogues, alternately calls the sophist: a hunter of rich young men, a fisherman with a hook, a merchant trading in knowledge for the use of souls, a charlatan. Underneath all this banter, the great moralist reveals a deep irony and a serious sense of purpose; so, when he sets sophistry against true philosophy, the pure love of beauty and goodness against the pursuit of false brilliance and vain appearances, he characterizes and, as it were, engraves in two profound strokes the difference between the philosopher and the sophist: *This one, he says, tends towards being; this one goes towards nothingness*.[15]

In the eighteenth century, the subversive doctrines of intellectual malefactors who had become more dangerous under the sun of Christian truth vindicated this judgment of ancient wisdom. It has been said of them, linking them to those of Plato's time: "Race of sophists! eternal race, mocking, implacable, who seek error with passion,

15 Plato, *Theaetetus*.

and for whom the shadow, whatever form it takes, is a discovery and a felicity. Socrates heard their voices around him as he taught Athenian youth about the existence and unity of God; it was they who poured the hemlock over him as he prophesied to his disciples the immortality of his soul and theirs. Jesus Christ saw them at the foot of his cross, and the Church, heir to all the truths he gave to the world, has never for a single day stopped dragging them after him. There is no progress in enlightenment that they do not combat with progress in the art of doubt and negation. Socrates was their first victim, Jesus Christ was their second; they hope that mankind will be their third, and they are working ardently towards it."[16]

The human race, their victim! It was this great murder, indeed, that was being prepared and was about to begin in 89. The sophist whose enchanting style most perfidiously distilled the poppies of tolerance, the intoxicating vapor of liberal ideas and the venom of deism, was the famous citizen of Geneva, Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

It's only fair to acknowledge that, alongside the clever sophists, there were some unconscious ones who were to contribute to the poisoning of the beautiful country of France, purely through ignorance, incomplete education and prejudice. Less dangerous at first glance, they become more so because they serve, alas, as intermediaries. History tells us that in some Locustid poisonings, two slaves were employed. The first served a beverage that was too hot, but harmless; the lips of the guests could get close to it to better deceive the victim; the other slave, with cold water, poured the poison. In the same way, there will be two kinds of revolutionary beverage: some will dispose people to accept it, others will make them take it.

After this preliminary observation, let's return to the Jewish question:

The trials of liberalism, as we said, were for a long time private, in the sense that they did not emanate from a public meeting, an assembly. Pamphlets and pamphlets were its organs; salons and dinners heard its first outpourings, mingled with those of champagne. *The Salons' Revolt, women's liberalism*, these are entries on the title page of a very curious passage in one of Taine's learned works: "The salons

16 Lacordaire, *Discours sur les études philosophiques*.

opened up to political philosophy, as a result of *the Social Contract*, the *Encyclopédie*, and the preaching of Rousseau, Mably, d'Holbach, Raynal and Diderot."[17] — "A dreaded word, *citoyen*, imported by Rousseau, has entered the ordinary language, and, what is decisive, women adorn themselves with it as with a cockade." You know how much I am a citizen," writes a young girl to her friend. As a citizen and as a friend, could I receive more pleasant news than that of my dear little one's health and peace?"[18] In all this, there were still only private trials of liberalism. But here came a public test, and it was on the Jewish question that it would be attempted.

The Jews had followed the development of the liberal movement as skillful observers. Carefully avoiding, out of religion as much as prudence, the protection, at least openly, of philosophers who posed as the declared adversaries of Christianity and Revelation, they had become particularly attached to celebrities who bordered on both philosophism and Christianity, such as Malesherbes and Montesquieu.

Montesquieu in particular was their man. In a chapter entitled *Most humble admonitions to the inquisitors of Spain and Portugal*,[19] the author of *L'Esprit des lois* (The Spirit of Laws) spoke extremely favorably of the Jews, and they invoked the authority of his name at every opportunity, in their petitions to Versailles and in their lawyers' pleadings. They took advantage of Rousseau, but did not rely on him. They relied on Montesquieu. A very fine, albeit non-Christian, critic, comparing Montesquieu and Rousseau, noted these differences: "*The Spirit of Laws* was one of the great milestones in the history of human thought in the 18TH century. Like the statue of which Bacon speaks, which, without walking itself, indicates the road with its finger, *The Spirit of Laws* posed in all their aspects the political problems whose solution preoccupied all minds, those, at least, to whom the future appeared uncertain and covered with dark clouds. It was addressed to men of reason and experience, statesmen and thinkers; by this very fact, it escaped the pull of the crowd, which does not want to

17 TAINE, *les Origines de la France contemporaine, l'Ancien Régime*, p. 385.

18 *Ibid*., p. 386.

19 About an eighteen-year-old Jewish girl who was burned at the last auto-da-fé in Lisbon (*Esprit des lois*, XXV, 13.)

be enlightened, but moved. On the contrary, Rousseau, less reserved than Montesquieu, in love with popularity to the point of excess, was not afraid to speak the language of passion in these terrible matters. Rousseau made many disciples; he truly created a school and a party, of which the *Declaration of the Rights of Man* was the expression and the flag. Montesquieu won only the admiration of wise and cultured minds, and *The Spirit of Law*s remained unknown to the people."[20] They understood the sign indicated by the statue's finger. Before taking advantage of the great agitator, Rousseau, they turned their attention to the moderators, Montesquieu and Malesherbes.[21]

Suddenly, the paper *Mercure de France* announced this news:

The city of Metz has just put this question up for competition: Are there ways to make Jews happier and more useful in France? The competition was initiated by the city's *Royal Society of Sciences and Arts*.

On the face of it, such a subject would appear to be nothing short of peaceful and appropriately liberal. It could only arouse curiosity and sympathy. It produced a certain amount of excitement. "This competition, opened by a major literary society, had a great impact, and the *Mercure de France* wrote about it in excellent terms.[22]

But it is far from certain that the leaders and publicists of the French people understood the seriousness of philosophism's attempt on behalf of the Jews; effect of the beverage! They failed to realize

20 *Dictionnaire des sciences philosophiques*, by a society of professors and scholars, t. IV.

21 Although Montesquieu was nothing less than an innovator, and revered the king, the laws and the country, his writings helped the revolutionary party, which, on his death, lost a moderator; he then became nothing more than the great agitator of the century (Cantu, *Histoire universelle*, t. XVII.).

As for religion, and especially the Christian religion, Montesquieu speaks of it with as much gravity as respect; however, we can rightly reproach him, as was said of Gibbon, that he has piously buried it Montesquieu's religious point of view is theistic rationalism. He has particularly contributed to the prejudice that considers Protestantism to be more suited to free constitutions, and Catholicism to be contrary to liberty and especially in favor of strict monarchy (Goschler, *Dictionnaire de théologie*).

22 *Mercure de France*, year 1785, 2nd semester. — *Revue des études juives*, no. 1, p. 84

that the opening of this contest was tantamount to the opening of a breach; Metz, despite its citadels, was about to let the Semitic invasion through, and philosophism was the traitor! M. de Bonald rightly wrote in his *Mélanges*: *Philosophy, tired of reigning only in literature, took the reins of political government... The Jews were the first objects of its philanthropic affections.*[23] It's true, the Jews were the first objects of his philanthropic affections: but the eminent publicist is mistaken, as are other writers, in placing the beginning of philosophical sympathies for the Jews at the time of the Constituent Assembly, in 1791: it's in Metz that this beginning should be placed, in 1788.

23 DE BONALD. *Mélanges*, I, p. 368.

IV

Significance of the choice of Metz for this contest.

The choice of Metz was not without significance.

For the Jews of France, this city, like Strasbourg, was associated with the most bitter memories.

In our first volume, we recounted how, for four hundred years, the Jews had been forced to leave Strasbourg every evening at the sound of the trumpet, to seek lodging and sleep elsewhere; and also how, with Cerfberr's pride revolting one evening in the face of this custom, the skillful and tenacious Israelite had conquered, in Strasbourg, not only the right of residence, but even that of property. From Strasbourg, then, the idea of becoming property owners had been awakened, communicated and stimulated among Israelites throughout the rest of France.

Another idea was attached to the choice of Metz: that of rehabilitation, reparation - we might almost say revenge, such is the strangeness of the documents!

Indeed, it was in Metz that the execution of *Raphaël Lévy*, which caused such a stir in France towards the end of the 17TH century, took place.

Here's what prompted it; we've borrowed the story from the *Archives Israélites*:

> It was 1669. Raphaël Lévy, born in the village of Chellaincourt, four leagues from Metz, lived in Boulay, a village in the Moselle department, then part of the Duchy of Lorraine. He was a poor cattle merchant, as is still the case in the vicinity of this town; and with this very arduous, not very lucrative trade, he raised a family consisting of his wife, a son and a daughter, already engaged; he had reached the age of 56, without a single complaint being made against him, until the fatal day of September 25, 1669, the eve of the great Feast of Trumpets. On that day, a Wednesday, at 7 a.m., he left Boulay on horseback, accompanied by his son, to go to Metz to buy oil and fetch a ram's horn for the next day's feast. By 3 p.m., he was back at Les Etangs, where he had

> his horse shod, and by 4 a.m. he was back in Boulay with his son and the local miller. It is well known that on the eve of festivals, Jews return early to avoid violating certain precepts.
>
> On the same day, at 1 o'clock in the evening, a woman named Mangeote Willemin, wife of Gilles Lemoine, wheelwright of the village of Glatigny, was going to a fountain, two hundred paces from the village, to wash some linen; her child, named Didier, aged 3, was walking behind her; it seems she paid no attention and the child ran out onto the road and into the Hayez forest, where he lost his way. And as it was approaching winter, he was probably devoured by wolves, and indeed, on the following November 26th, four pig farmers found a badly disfigured child's head with a shirt collar.
>
> The mother, having turned around and no longer seen her son, ran to warn her husband; together they set out to find him, and discovered the remains of the child's footsteps on the road; but, instead of crossing the road and entering the wood, the father had the unfortunate idea that the child had taken the road to Metz, and he headed for that town; Having met a cavalryman from the Count de Vaudemont's company and asked him about the child, the cavalryman said he had found a Jew with a large black beard riding a white horse, carrying a child in front of him, and that when he met him he had moved away from the main road within pistol range. The father ran to Metz as far as the Porte des Allemands. There, he was told that Lévy de Boulay had been seen entering the city, and that he usually stayed in rue des Juifs, with his relative Garçon. He went to this street and asked for his child; they told him they didn't know what he meant. Eight days later, on October 30, the father lodged a complaint with the criminal lieutenant of the Metz bailiwick.

The trial proved that the child had not been eaten by wolves. The Parliament of Metz concluded that the child had been kidnapped, and Raphaël Lévy was condemned to be shackled alive, and the sentence was carried out on January 17, 1670. Let's continue with the *Archives*:

> On Friday morning, January 17, the sentence was read to him; he was taken from his cell to the torture chamber, where he told the commissioners to write down the following: That anything he might say, any confession that the pain of torture might wring from

him, is a lie; for he is innocent, and all Israel is innocent; that he was not accusing his judges, but the witnesses. On this, the holy and pious man endured all the tortures without deviating from truth and justice from beginning to end, and the most acute pains could not persuade him to confess this lie by the weakest word; he persisted in the truth, saying that he, as well as all Israel, was innocent. As he was about to lose his soul through the great suffering, they tried to make him drink wine to strengthen him, but he refused, because it was not according to the Hebrew rites; then they took him out of the torture and led him to a room, where they made him sit before the fire to warm him up: several people then came to urge him to speak, but he would not lend an ear to anyone, and he desired that Israelites be sent to him. This request was granted, so Seligman, the trustee, and Rabbi Zanville went to find him and console him; he recommended his wife and children to them, then wept, prayed and put on his phylacteries. At 2 p.m., he was taken from his prison and brought before the Metropolitan Church to beg forgiveness; but he would neither take the candle nor ask forgiveness, for, he said, he neither wanted nor should ask forgiveness for a crime he had not committed; From there he was taken to Fournirue, where a carriage was waiting to seat him; he said that, as God had given him the strength to endure such suffering, He would continue to give him strength to sanctify His holy name and go to the place of the pyre. Many came to urge him to confess, but he rebuffed them, saying: "Don't you see heaven open and two angels ready to receive my soul? Several Christians testify that they heard these words coming from his mouth.

He then walked to Champ-à-Seille, the place where the pyre was lit; the sentence was read to him again, warning him to reflect and confess; but he remained faithful to the truth, protesting his innocence. He approached the pyre that had been prepared for him; the executioner then covered his face with straw so as not to see the fire, but he removed it from his face, and in less than a quarter of an hour his body was burned and annihilated.[24]

The *Archives Israélites* follow the story with this reflection: "If this man had belonged to the Christian communion, the Chateaubriands and Lamartines would have sung of his death; but a poor Jew, a

24 *Archives israélites*, year 1811, pages 371-3 and 609-10.

cattle merchant, who cares?[25]

Don't be fooled, *Archives Israélites*, the cattle merchant found something better than Eudorus's cantor in the *Martyrs*: Metz itself, after condemning and burning him, took up the cause of its people. However, impartiality leads us to say: Here again is the effect of the beverage! for a century later (1670-1788), Metz was *turned around*; here is the proof, in this admission about the contest opened in favor of the Jews:

"The initiative taken by the Literary Society of Metz was of great *importance*. It was a role well suited to the city of Metz, a liberal city par excellence, which for several centuries had had a *model Jewish community* in its midst, and which, having resisted persecution against Protestants, had on the contrary, and on several occasions, aldermen of the Reformed religion. It was also up to the *liberal men* who made up the Royal Society of Sciences and Arts, and who were *in frequent contact with the country's Jews*, to bring public opinion back from the age-old error into which it had fallen concerning the Jews, and to seek ways of making them more useful to the country and happier themselves, by freeing them from the reprobation that was being heaped upon them."[26]

For us, we can only reason as follows:

If Raphaël Lévy was innocent, Providence, which is all-powerful, consoled the poor cattle merchant's ashes with the first signal of reparation to his people;

If he was guilty, the Jewish audacity is frightening because, from the place of the crime and the stake that punished him, it challenged Christian society to emancipate itself.

25 *Ibid*., 610.

26 *L'Emancipation des juifs devant la Société royale des sciences et arts de Metz en 1787 et M. Rœderer*, by ABRAHAM CAHEN (*Revue des études juives*, no. 1, p. 84).

V

Its holding and duration. Dangers revealed.

"Searching for ways to make Israelites more useful and happier in France" was the aim of the Metz competition. The initiative came from the city's *Royal Society of Sciences and Arts.*

The competition was announced in 1785.

Competitors had two years to send in their briefs, until the tin of 1787.

In fact, seven briefs were sent in.

The commission that examined them selected two; but, instead of awarding the prizes, it encouraged the authors to improve them, and, extending the competition, postponed the new sanction until 1788. There seems to be nothing but harmless in all this. The *Royal Society of Sciences and Arts* even seems to deserve praise for provoking this competition and extending its duration. Here, however, are the dangers lurking in the background.

The project to improve the lot of the Israelites had entered deeply into the heart of the generous Louis XVI. As early as January 1784, more than a year before the first resounding announcement of the Metz competition, the king had issued an edict abolishing the corporal tolls to which the Jews were subjected. Then, from Versailles, came the Letters Patent of 1784, which resolved the critical situation of the Jews of Alsace by easing it. Finally, the monarch had put the question of emancipating the Israelites under study, and had entrusted it to Malesherbes, who was working on it with a commission from the Council of State; an edict was being prepared under the eyes of the king, in which "Christian prudence would be combined with royal benevolence."[27] Meanwhile, the second noisy announcement came from Metz: the competition had been extended. How strange. Why the extension?[28] Why maintain an independent center of study

27 All these benefits of Louis XVI have been extensively described in our first volume: *L'Entrée des Israélites dans la Société française.*

28 "The apparent reason given for this seems quite childish. The famous Metz-born Count Rœderer was the commission's rapporteur. However, "with his profoundly liberal and practical mind, he grasped the importance of this

and ideas in Metz, when the question is being seriously studied in Versailles? Is it not to discuss and control the royal edict? And if events were to come to a head, would it not be to remove the question from the monarchy's hands? First danger of this contest.

The second, and even more serious, danger is that philosophers will preside over the competition and award the prizes. At Versailles, the direction that the Crown is giving to the study of the question is Christian, and Malesherbes, philosopher that he is, would not dare to introduce, under the eyes of the King and Queen, anything contrary to the . interests of the Church and the kingdom.[29] But in Metz, in the midst of the Jewish community, the question slipped under the Hebraic influence that could not fail to steer it surreptitiously. All the members of the commission who read the reports sent in and award the prizes are philosophers. They should judge impartially, but they themselves poison the issue with liberal ideas. What could be more pernicious than these words from the president, M. Le Payen, at the solemn session of August 25, 1788, for the distribution of prizes:

"It was not without great satisfaction that the Royal Society noted that the three works it crowned, founded on the same principles, supported by the same facts, tending towards the same goal and by more or less the same means, were authored by people on whom the difference of state, country and probably religion, did not stop the action of the *eternal truths of nature and reason*. In general, all but

competition and all the details involved in the *desired solution*. After reading, analyzing and appreciating all the briefs sent in submitted, and having judged the most important and the best done, he found that none of these works met the expectations of the *Société royale de Metz*.

"On his report, the Royal Society left the competition open until 1788, especially urging the two authors whose memoirs had struck it, *to enter the competition again*." (*Revue des études Juives*, no. 1, pages 85, 90, 93.) Isn't it childish, but at the same time significant, to see two competitors encouraged by the Commission to re-enter the competition, because their memoirs are not yet sufficiently in line with the *desired solution*?

29 Did Malesherbes disapprove of this provoked and prolonged contest in Metz? The documents are silent. All that is known is that he was on friendly terms and studied with Count Rœderer, who was passionate about the contest in favor of the Jews.

one or two of the submissions we have received accuse our prejudices against the Jews of being the primary cause of their vices, and in particular of the one that revolts us the most (usury). We reduce them to the impossibility of being honest; how can we expect them to be? *Let's be fair to them, so that they become fair to us*. This is the wish of humanity and of all reasonable people; everything leads us to believe that the government has taken it on board, and will not delay in fulfilling it."[30] Such language was a betrayal of the Church and of France; it accused not so much the Jews as the Christians. This president, perpetual secretary of the *Royal Society of Sciences and Arts*, justified his name: M. Le Payen.

Three of the nine memoirs submitted to the Commission were deemed worthy of the award. The winning authors were: Messrs Grégoire, parish priest at Emberménil, near Lunéville; Thiéry, lawyer at the Nancy Parliament; and Zalkind-Houritz, a Polish Jew living in Paris.

No honorable mention was given to the sixth memoir; its author, a Benedictine from Saint-Avold and former parish priest of Charleville, by the name of Dom Chais, said in it that: "*Jews being birds of prey, it is necessary, without killing them, to cut off their beaks and talons,*" and to make them useful, the author saw nothing better, in those days, than to employ them "*to harvest honey and wax throughout the kingdom, given their decided taste for these substances*." More than one reader will be tempted to agree, a century on, that if we had listened to and crowned the naive Benedictine, the job of emptying the hives would have prevented, perhaps, the emptying of the State coffers, and that this Ruth-like work would have saved the public fortune from a Pharaonic shipwreck!...

30 *Affiches des Évêchés et Lorraine*, year 1788, ' n° 35, p. 275, col. 4. — *Revue des études juives*, no. 1, p. 104.

VI

ABBÉ GRÉGOIRE, PARISH PRIEST OF EMBERMÉNIL NEAR LUNÉVILLE, MAKES A NAME FOR HIMSELF AND WINS THE PRIZE.

The Revolution is a thief, a judgment we justified in our first volume.[31] It was bound to take violently, but it was also bound to steal surreptitiously. This second method of theft was inaugurated in Metz.

Here, the Revolution surreptitiously appropriated the question of improving the lot of the Jews, which had been thought up and initiated by the Crown at Versailles, and whose prudent solution was to rank among its titles of honor in the eyes of history. In Metz, the larceny began, to be completed and legitimized before the Constituent Assembly.

Until then, one man had been in charge: Malesherbes. The king had appointed him, and the Jews surrounded him with their obsequiousness. But the Revolution brought another man to the fore, Abbé Grégoire, parish priest of Emberménil. He was the main winner of the Metz competition, for his *Essay on the physical, moral and political regeneration of the Jews.* Good Malesherbes, you've gone to a lot of trouble on behalf of the Hebrews! They've left you, they're going to surround the parish priest of Emberménil from now on and attach themselves to him, but, alas! like .

rust to a Temple utensil.

In the major crises that have shaken Christian society, the Spirit of Darkness has always used a priest. Evil, then, enters more deeply, because *the corruption of the best becomes the worst*, and the divine ferment, of which the fallen priest was the depository, acquires a terrible efficacy in its return against God. The priest Arius served for Arianism; the bishop Photius, for Greek schism; the monk Luther, for Protestantism; the priest Gregory, for Jewish preponderance. When they appear, the glow of the priesthood that enhances their respective natural qualities points them out to the crowd, and soon, with the coal stolen from the censer, the fire is lit! "Some names

31 *L'Entrée des Israélites*, Book IV, Chap. VI.

have left behind them, on the waves of time, a dazzling trace and cast a great luster on history. But don't let that seduce you! Look carefully: their splendors are the splendors of fire; their fires, the fires of lightning and thunder. It looks like the sinister flame projected into the distance by a vast mass of impure matter suddenly ablaze; it is not the soft, pure light so harmoniously spread across the vaults of heaven by the sovereign brush of the sovereign artist."[32] Such will be the brilliance of the priest Grégoire, parish priest of Emberménil, in the Jewish question, a brilliance that will have nothing either of the discreet clarity of the sanctuary lamp!

He made his debut at the Metz competition, where he was the most highly praised winner. As we shall see more of his face, words and deeds in the course of this book, we will confine ourselves here to quoting the peroration of his dissertation presented at the Metz competition:

"A new century is about to dawn; may the palms of Humanity adorn its frontispiece, and may posterity applaud in advance the reunion of your hearts. The Jews are members of that universal family which must establish brotherhood between all peoples; and over them, as over you, Revelation extends its majestic veil. Children of the same father, remove all pretext for the aversion of your brothers, who will one day be reunited in the same fold; open to them asylums where they can quietly rest their heads and dry their tears; and finally, may the Jew, granting the Christian a return of tenderness, embrace in me his fellow citizen and his friend."[33]

What could be more reassuring, more enchanting even, than this portico adorned with palms that Gregory announces and celebrates? The misfortune is that at its base there is an abyss, a dreadful void. Let's take a look at this abyss and explore its depths.

32 Donoso Cortès, *Œuvres*, t. III.

33 Grégoire, *Essai sur la régénération physique, morale et politique des juifs*, p. 194.

CHAPTER II
Christ rejected by the National Assembly (1789)

I
Name given in the Scriptures to God's Adversary: *the serpent, bar* or *rooked*. This name was strikingly realized in 1789.

At the head of such a chapter, the name of Satan must be pronounced in defense of the French nation.

He is the great architect of revolutions, and in this, he justifies his name of Satan, *the adversary*! for such is the meaning, in Hebrew, of this cursed name. An adversary of God, he is also, in humanity, an adversary of the evolution of truth, goodness and beauty. He thwarts evolution with revolution.

He is rarely an adversary, standing upright, rarely facing us, because he has felt - and has not forgotten - the arm of the Almighty; but he is oblique, diverted, sinuous, like the serpent, whose figure he has borrowed and whose walk he has degraded in earthly paradise.

If we meditate carefully on the different phases of evil in the history of the world, we will easily recognize the sinuous traces of the adversary who crawls, spies and takes advantage. In the time of Mohammed, he used the Bible and the name of Abraham to detach the East from Christ. In Luther's time, he took advantage of the universal need for reformation to take half the West away from the Church through the Reformation. His path was almost always tortuous and circuitous. But with the French Revolution, it changed. The Adversary's attitude changed. He no longer came to fight obliquely, but head-on!

So, in the gigantic struggle he's about to engage in, a new characteristic name suits him. Again, the Bible contains it. The Adversary still appears as a serpent, but with this strange and terrible qualifica-

tion given to him by Isaiah: the bar-serpent, the crooked serpent.[34] What energy in this figure!

We know just how powerful a lever is for shaking and lifting.

So when did Satan show himself as a lever? In 1789, when society, moved by an unusual and infernal force, suddenly felt itself lifted up against God, but lifted up to a height of pride that had never been seen before, with the *Rights of Man* supplanting the Rights of God!

Archimedes used to say: "Let someone give me a fulcrum, and with the lever I will lift the earth." What the geometer couldn't do, Satan has. In 1789, the Adversary finally found a point of support, long sought after, long prepared, in the superb and solitary reason of man, this reason emancipated from faith; and, insinuating himself there, applying himself there, he forms the lever: society is then stirred and shaken to its very foundations.

Indeed, he alone is strong enough to ensure that, in the shaking of the entire social edifice, the *Revolution*, which means reversal, overturning, this time reaches its plenitude: putting on top what, according to eternal laws, should be on the bottom, and on the bottom what had been placed on top.

To achieve such a result, the serpent-levier's first effort is to lift the ancient cornerstone placed by Clovis at the roots of French society - *Christ who loves the Franks* - out of its place, and replace it with another foundation. This is the emptiness, the chasm that is opening up beneath the pompous social portico, sung by Gregory about the Jews: "A new century is about to open, may the palms of Humanity adorn its frontispiece!"[35]

Now is the time, or never, to plumb the void, the abyss, beneath the portico that bears the palms of Humanity on its frontispiece.

34 *Serpentem vectem*. Translator's note: Isaiah 27:1 "In that day the Lord with his hard, and great, and strong sword shall visit *Leviathan the bar serpent*, and *Leviathan the crooked serpent*, and shall slay the whale that is in the see."

35 *Essai sur la régénération*, etc., p. 194.

II

THE GLOOMY ABSENCE OF THE DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF MAN AND OF THE CITIZEN, NOTWITHSTANDING ALL THE APOLOGIES WE'VE TRIED TO MAKE FOR IT: THE CORNERSTONE OF THE SOCIAL ORDER, CHRIST, HAS BEEN REJECTED.

This portico, announced by Grégoire, has not remained imaginary. The National Assembly raised it and gave it a name: *the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen.*

Here is its pompous frontispiece or preamble:

"The representatives of the French people, constituted as the National Assembly, considering that ignorance, forgetfulness or contempt for human rights are the sole causes of public misfortune and government corruption, have resolved to set forth, in a solemn declaration, the natural, inalienable and sacred rights of man, so that this declaration, constantly present to all members of the social body, will constantly remind them of their rights and duties; so that the acts of the legislative power and those of the executive power, being able to be compared at every moment with the goal of any political institution, are more respected; so that the claims of the citizens, founded henceforth on simple and incontestable principles, always turn to the maintenance of the constitution and the happiness of all.

"Consequently, the National Assembly recognizes and declares, in the presence and under the auspices of the Supreme Being, the following rights of man and citizen..."

However indulgent the interpretation given to this preamble to the Declaration may be, and notwithstanding all the apologies that have been attempted, a gloomy absence shines through, a chilling emptiness: Christ is not named.

Passed over in silence, he is rejected. It's equivalent! For to remain silent about Christ, when we owe him everything, is to deny him;

Not to name him, when what is at stake is, as this preamble states, the most serious determination for society, a new order of things which must ensure the happiness of the human race, is to commit a radiation, an apostasy;

Silence that is all the more mournful and formidable in its consequences, because it comes from the great assembly of the French nation, and from an assembly composed as it was in 1789.

Indeed, how was it composed?

By virtue of their education, birth, social position and enlightenment, the members of the Estates General are the elite of the nation. They include bishops, priests and eminent religious, and all are Catholics. Raised in Christian houses, they have been taught exclusively by Jesuits, Oratorians, Sulpicians, Benedictines, Barnabites and secular priests, renowned for their knowledge and respected for their virtues. Finally, they are the legislators of a Christian people.

It is therefore natural to think that they will be inspired by the social doctrines of the Gospel, and that they will pass on in their work, if not the text, at least the spirit of this divine code; that they will seek the principal bases of the new order of things in the ancient traditions of the monarchy of Clovis, Charlemagne and Saint Louis; that they will carefully examine the charters and institutions of the Catholic states of Europe; in a word, that the monuments and legislators of the Christian centuries will be their oracles, so as to make the wisdom of the fathers serve the advantage of the children.

The opposite is true.

The Assembly, or rather the Revolution it personifies, is splitting the life of French society in two, by repudiating the Christian past, and, to make it clear that it is no longer inspired by this past, it is silent about Christ:

Silence on him, in the preamble to the Declaration;

Silence on him, in the wording of the articles;

Silence on him, during the months-long discussion. Not once are the names of Jesus Christ, of the Gospel, of Christianity, on the lips of these legislators, during the discussion of human rights. Such prolonged silence is mournful: it's the only way to keep quiet about the dead! The new social edifice is being built with the clear repudiation of the old cornerstone. The foundations of French society are being shaken and reshaped. Man replaces God-Man. It is no longer the God-man who forms the new social foundation, but man. The humanitarian society is proclaimed.

Let's take a guess:

If, back in time, by divine permission, Saint Paul had entered the National Assembly, what would he have thought of the Declaration of the Rights of Man? St. Paul has rightly been called the Apostle to the nations, because, spending himself for them, he led them from idolatry to the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ. When he entered the midst of the Areopagus of Athens, he borrowed the beginning of his harangue from this famous inscription he had encountered on his way: *To the unknown God*.[36] Had he been in the midst of the Estates General of the French nation, he would, on reading the Declaration of the Rights of Man, have been sure to drop this mournful appraisal: *To the misunderstood God*!

The great Apostle, in the course of his apostolate, had laid down this rule of conduct for the nations with regard to Christ: *Let him come first in all things*.[37] But here, not only has Christ fallen from first place, he no longer ranks, he no longer counts.[38]

36 Acts of the Apostles 17:21.

37 Colossians 1:18.

38 M. GABRIEL DE BELCASTEL, a former senator, encountered the Declaration of the Rights of Man during one of his eloquent outbursts of faith, and slammed it as a champion of old France:

"This prodigy of the century's folly dares to build a world by removing the cornerstone of the world! Of course, this is not an oversight. For, at the time when the Declaration is being deliberated, Jesus Christ fills and enlivens the moral sphere of humanity, as the light of the sun illuminates and enlivens the globe.

"Is it possible to forget that two hundred years after the Christian era, when the Church, bride of the Man-God, delivered the human soul from the infamies of paganism, raised it to the highest peaks of moral greatness, freed women and children, abolished slavery, repressed all tyranny, raised all authority and obedience, inaugurated fraternity through universal prayer to the heavenly Father, brought down to earth the divine bird of charity to shelter under its wings the suffering, the poor and the little ones, when all disorder and all defilement would be no more than an infidelity to the laws of the Gospel, taught by her to the universe, and the simple practice of the Decalogue, of which she is the depositary, would be the advent of the dreamed-of golden age? ... No! this insulting silence is not oblivion: it's exile! Voltaire spent thirty years hurling the blasphemy against Christ that my mouth refuses to repeat; Rousseau, beating down all cults, proclaimed the native goodness and

III

It is historically certain that the legislators of '89 wanted to get rid of Christ as the cornerstone.

It has been said of the National Assembly, to explain and mitigate its fault, that it confined itself to avoiding the name of Christ in the Constitution, without any hostile bias.

Avoiding Christ, especially when you're the French nation: what an excuse!

The serpent was very clever, and inspired us to proceed by elimination. Eliminated from the law, the name of Christ will soon be eliminated from morals. Don't laws create morals? The day will come when the nation that was once France will no longer have the courage to publicly pronounce the name of Jesus Christ. In parliaments, it will be a miracle when a deputy utters it: people on the left will snigger, and many on the right will lower their heads. In other public gatherings, when the Divinity is named, people will agree to say God, but will carefully avoid the name Jesus Christ. And finally, even within Christian families and among Christians, the pronunciation of this august name will become timid and rare. This silence of weakness will have had as its principle, and will allege as its justification, the silence of the National Assembly. The legislators of '89 laid the cornerstone of scandal. No, they were not allowed to pass over in silence the One whom the heavens adore and who has formed in space the harmonious concert of Christian nations, and in the midst of them the French nation!

"They confined themselves to avoiding His name without any hostile bias," it has been said, lending them the attitude of those pitiful men who, out of a residue of reverential fear, avoid encountering a sanctuary they would not wish to enter. Would to God that this had been the thinking and the motive for the silence of the 89 legislators! But, alas, it was not so. On the contrary, it is historically certain that they wanted to get rid of Christ as the cornerstone of independence of nature: and the pen of the Constituent Assembly is held by the disciples of these two apostates. The exile of the Christ of human rights is therefore apostasy."

the new society they were founding.

Three things superabundantly prove this:

A. Firstly, the *goal* they were pursuing.

Indeed, what did they want?

To rebuild society from top to bottom, using Rousseau's *Social Contract* as their catechism, which they applied point by point, read taken, as the type of citizen they wanted to form, the *abstract* man, isolated from Christian civilization, that Rousseau portrays, i.e. the man without Revelation, the man of nature. This is their type, as they put it: "When we wanted to imagine the founding of a human society, we vaguely imagined a half-bucolic, half-theatrical scene, much like that seen on the frontispieces of illustrated books on morality and politics. Half-naked men, or men dressed in animal skins, are gathered under a great oak tree; in their midst a venerable old man rises and speaks to them in the language of nature and reason; he proposes that they unite and explains to them what they are obliging themselves to by this mutual commitment; he shows them the harmony of public and private interest and ends by making them feel the beauties of virtue. Everyone immediately shouts with joy, embraces him, rushes around him and chooses him as their magistrate; on all sides they dance under the elm trees, and happiness is now established on earth. - I'm not exaggerating. The National Assembly's addresses to the nation will be harangued in this style. For years to come, the government will speak to the people like a Gessner[39] shepherd."[40] So it was no longer the Christian who was to be the object of the solicitude of the legislators of '89, but the man of nature, the man before and without Revelation.

The truth is,

Was there, decently, any room left for Christ in an enterprise that made such a clean sweep of Christianity?

They have therefore deliberately eliminated Christ. No longer taking into account the fact that the French are Christians, they have necessarily removed the divine Master of Christians from the

39 Translator's note: Salomon Gessner (1730-1788) was a Swiss painter known for his idyllic and pastoral scenes.

40 TAINE, *l'Ancien Régime*, p. 310-311.

French Constitution. Disdaining *living stones* for their edifice, they have, all the more so, rejected the *cornerstone*. Some did so with premeditation, others out of cowardly complacency. Almost all were fascinated by Rousseau's influence.

B. The leaders and a significant part of the Assembly publicly revealed and ratified their hostility to the living God. It had been decided that the enumeration of Human Rights would be preceded by a preamble or frontispiece which, by its solemn terms, would impose respect on future generations. You can read it again in § II of this chapter. However, when the Assembly decided on the terms, not only was there no mention of Christ, but the most violent storms erupted when some deputies wanted to attach this preamble, this frontispiece, to the notion of the Divinity as to a tutelary vault.

The newspapers of the time recorded these stormy sessions. Here is a faithful summary:

Impiety, disguised under the name of philosophism, proposes to inscribe in the preamble that man derives his rights from nature. M. le comte de Virieu observes forcefully: "Eh! what is nature? What idea does it present? It's an empty word, which robs us of the idea of the Creator, to consider only matter.

Supporting M. de Virieu, Lally-Tollendal asks "that we don't forget the Supreme Being."

Unfortunately, this name "Supreme Being" only expressed the *minimum* of Divinity; nevertheless, when, on several occasions, this *minimum* of Divinity was requested from the Assembly, the tumult of the opponents and the tribunes drowned out the voice of the speakers, and the bias of not hearing was most evident.

This was especially true during the last sessions:

The Bishop of Clermont had stated that the principles of the French Constitution should rest on religion as on an eternal foundation;

This time, Mirabeau took the trouble to reply. This time, Mirabeau took the trouble to reply, in a disdainful and sometimes ironic tone: *"We have,"* he said, *"only to concern ourselves with the things of this world... Let us allow freedom of worship, let us say no more, and let us sleep in peace."*

The discussion resumed another day; Maillet and the Comte de

Clermont-Lodève insisted that the necessity of religion should be affirmed, and respect for everyone's religion proclaimed as a right; but Talleyrand replied "that this will be dealt with in the Constitution, but that the place for such affirmations is not in the *Declaration*." This disdainful repartee is greeted with loud approval. The discussion cannot continue. An obviously calculated disorder prevents contradictions from arising. The uproar is such that the chairman offers his resignation twice.[41]

Finally, this *minimum* of Divinity, conceived in these terms: "In the presence and under the auspices of the Supreme Being", managed to pass, because it excluded recognition of the *living God* of Revelation. Like a ferocious dog that is still restrained, revolutionary impiety grumblingly consented to let the vague statement of the Supreme Being "expressly reduced to the role of a witness without authority, whose presence scarcely embarrasses the Assembly, which gives him a perfunctory salute as it gives him its leave" be written in the preamble.[42]

C. Is there any need to cite the *articles* of the Declaration that follow on from the preamble and form the principles of '89 as the final proof that Christ was firmly excluded from the minds of the legislators?[43] An unsuspecting historian had the courage to say: "These

41 ROUX ET BUCHEZ, *Hist. parlem. de la Revol.*, t. II. meeting of August (1789.)

42 *Dix Ans de l'histoire du droit*, 1789-1799, by LUCIEN BRUN, p. 17-18.

43 The Declaration's articles can be divided into two categories, according to Lucien Brun's apt classification.

"*The first* contains vulgar maxims of universal justice that are absolutely indisputable. Thus: social distinctions can only be based on common futility; the law only has the right to defend actions that are harmful to society; anything that is not forbidden by the law cannot be prevented, and no one can be forced to do what the law does not order; the law is the same for all; all citizens are eligible for all jobs, and there are no grounds for preference between them other than the degree of their ability to fill them; property is an inviolable and sacred right, and so on.

"None of this is subject to contradiction. One is only astonished that the legislators of '89 should have believed that they were revealing unknown truths to the world, by proclaiming with such pomp and circumstance axioms of natural law, from which they should, no doubt, draw inspiration to bring

are so many daggers aimed at society: it will suffice to push the handle to bring in the blade."[44] The legislators of '89 sharpened the blade; the clubs and hordes of '93 will push the handle. Let's be the judge:

Principles in '89	Applications in '93
Art. II - The natural and imprescriptible rights of man are... resistance to oppression.	"We are oppressed, let us resist and rise up in arms."
Art. XV. - Society has the right to hold any public official accountable for his administration.	"Let's go to the Hôtel de Ville, let's question our lukewarm or suspicious magistrates, let's monitor their sessions, let's check whether they are prosecuting the priests and disarming the aristocrats; let's prevent them from plotting against the people, and let's make these evil clerks work."
Art. I. - Men are born and remain free and equal in rights.	"Consequently, let no one be excluded from the national guard; to all, even the indigent, a weapon, pike or rifle, to defend their liberty."
Art. III. - The principle of all sovereignty resides essentially in the nation.	"Hereditary royalty is therefore illegitimate: let's go to the Tuileries and throw down the throne."

about the necessary reforms, but which, before them, were not ignored even by governments which had disregarded them in practice.

"*The second* category contains the celebrated articles that more specifically form the principles of '89. Three ideas emerge from their various formulations: 1. no one is obliged to obey laws to which he has not consented; 2. legitimate power lies in numbers; 3. all men are born and remain equal. According to this exact summary, these are the principles of 89. The first denies authority, the second denies liberty and the third denies justice. *Dix Ans de l'histoire du droit*, 1789-1799, by Lucien Brun, p. 24-5.

44 Taine, *la Révolution*, t. I, p. 275,

Art. VI - The law is the expression of the general will.	"Listen to these clamors from the public square, these petitions arriving from all the towns: here is the general will which is the living law and which abolishes the written law. As such, the leaders of a few clubs in Paris will depose the King and violate the Legislative Assembly. In other words, the noisy, factious minority will supplant the sovereign nation; and from now on it lacks nothing to do as it pleases and when it pleases."[45]

Isn't the link between the principles of '89 and their application in '93 obvious? It couldn't have been any different. "On the still-bloody ruins of the Bastille was the hearth of the patriotic flame that was soon to ignite and *regenerate the nation*. It was no longer Paris, but a new city and a new people... Young people flocked from the guardhouses to the districts, practicing *in these popular assemblies to discuss and support the rights of men*."[46] Less than three years later, many of those who had collaborated or applauded the drafting of the Principles of 89, or the Rights of Man, were able to reread their *Declaration*, posted on the guillotine posts, and meditate, as they climbed the steps they were never to descend again, on the wisdom of their forecasts and the effectiveness of their work for "the happiness of all." This is what the Declaration of the Rights of Man had in store for us, and even then, these are only its most immediate consequences; later consequences, no less pernicious, remain shrouded in it, awaiting their turn to blossom.

One wonders, not without some surprise, when one reads in the *Moniteur* the minutes of the sessions devoted to the famous Declaration, how it could be that, out of 290 ecclesiastics who were members of the National Assembly, not one proposed replacing the vague denomination of the Supreme Being with the clear name of Jesus Christ. One is almost tempted to blame the clergy of the time for this silence. But astonishment ceases when we take the trouble to

45 TAINE, *la Révolution*, p. 276.

46 *Moniteur*, 1789, no. 33.

deduce, as we have tried to do, what was contained in the dreaded premises. A painful presentiment must have given all these priests a glimpse of what was to come from the Declaration, notwithstanding the misguidance of a few. Now, to bring the name of Jesus Christ to such a work, would it not have been to put the head of Christ on the body of Belial? This is obviously why the clergy who were part of the Assembly refrained from claiming the name of their divine Master: they acted wisely.

A vicious circle, a terrible circle! The clear intention to do without Christ as a cornerstone led to the drafting of such articles, to the concealment of these perfidious daggers; and once the articles were drafted, they could no longer decently bear the pure, radiant and tutelary name of the Savior of the world.

IV

THE DARKNESS OF THIS REJECTION OF CHRIST. A POIGNANT CONTRAST BETWEEN THE DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF MAN AND THE SALIC LAW, ONE THE CONSTITUTION OF FRANCE IN ITS MATURE AGE, THE OTHER THE CONSTITUTION OF FRANCE IN ITS INFANCY.

It is therefore historically certain that, when it came to laying the foundations of the new society, Christ was positively eliminated as the cornerstone: he was dispensed with premeditatedly.

At the beginning of this chapter, we stated our conviction that only God's adversary, Satan, had been capable of overturning the foundations of the French nation in this way. In striving to place the primary responsibility for such a radical and lamentable upheaval on the infernal serpent, we cannot, however, conceal and obscure a blackness on France's coat of arms, a blackness which, moreover, is essential to an understanding of the historical facts that follow. To our great regret, we must point it out.

Well, yes, France, hitherto so noble, so grateful, so tender, has begun this black stain, this blackness which will extend to the coats of arms of other nations and which is called ingratitude.

Blackness! because since the Sanhedrin (that great assembly of Jerusalem which, with Caiaphas at its head, had rejected Christ) no other national assembly had repeated this fault; and it was an assembly of France which took up the blindness and ingratitude of the Sanhedrin!

Blackness! because, when Christ had come down to earth, having found the nations groaning in slavery and sitting in the shadows of death, he had, at the price of his blood, delivered them, redeemed them, led them to the light; he had, truly, acquired them: they had become, as the apostle Saint Peter admirably expresses it, *the people of acquisition*.[47] Now, wasn't it ingratitude to set human rights against Christ's dual right to liberate and own them, and to use the pretext of the *rights of man* to get rid of Christ?

47 I Peter 2:9.

Blackness! Bitch that, if France had become France, wasn't it to Christ that it owed it? Hadn't He chosen it from among all the nations, as the ploughman chooses a delectable vine? Had he not been pleased to make her his most beautiful kingdom, after that of heaven? Had he not granted her a succession of kings similar to that which had prepared his birth in Judea? At the foot of his throne, did Charlemagne not give David his hand? Had he not entrusted the care of his Church to her, as he had entrusted the care of his mother to St. John? On her, finally, had he not fixed the eyes of the rest of the world, so that they would admire her, imitate her and follow her? And it was she who gave the world the signal to discard Christ!

We felt an unspeakable tug at our hearts as we undertook the parallel we're about to read, which has yet to be drawn. May this heartbreak be passed on, as we read the parallel!

France has given itself two famous constitutions, among all those that have peppered the phases of its history: the Salic Law and the Declaration of the Rights of Man; one, the charter of its childhood; the other, the charter of its mature age. Let's compare them.

Preamble to the Salic Law[48]

> The nation of the Franks, illustrious, founded by God, mighty in arms, firm in treaties of peace, profound in council, noble and healthy in body, of a singular whiteness and beauty, bold, agile, and fierce in battle, lately converted to the catholic faith, free of heresy; while it was yet under a barbarous belief seeking the key of knowledge by the inspiration of God, desiring justice, and observing piety according to the nature of its qualities : the Salic law was dictated by the chiefs of their nation, who, at that time, commanded therein.
>
> Four men were chosen from among many, namely: Wisogast,[49] Bodogast, Salogast, and Windogast, in the places called Salagheve, Bodogheve, Windogheve. These men met in three mâls,[50] carefully

48 *Pactus Legis salicæ quemadmodum Basilio Joanne* Heroldo *primum, et deinde a Godofredo* Wendelino *publicatus est, et notis illustratus a Georgio* Eccado.

49 *Gast* referred to the status of the patriarch or chief of the tribe.

50 *mâls* means assembly.

> discussed all the causes of trial, dealt with each one in particular and decreed their judgment in the following manner. Then, when, with God's help, Choldwig the long-haired, the handsome, the illustrious king of the Franks, had received the first Catholic baptism, all that in this pact was deemed unsuitable was amended with clarity by the illustrious kings Choldwig, Childebert, and Chlothar, and thus was drawn up this decree:
>
> *"Honor to Christ, who loves the Franks! May he guard their kingdom and fill their leaders with the light of his grace! May he protect the army, grant them signs that attest to their faith, joy, peace, felicity! May the Lord Jesus Christ direct in the path of piety those who govern! For this is the nation which, small in number, but brave and strong, shook off the hard yoke of the Romans, and which, after recognizing the sanctity of baptism, sumptuously adorned with gold and precious stones the bodies of the holy martyrs whom the Romans had consumed by fire, mutilated by iron, or had torn apart by beasts."*

Following this preamble, which has a warlike vivacity, the Salic Law is set out in 408 articles. This law of the early Franks was above all a penal code.[51] Of the 408 articles, 343 are devoted to judicial penalties, of which 77 provide for and punish animal theft, as follows: 19, theft of pigs; 17, theft of horses; 14, theft of bulls, oxen or cows; 6, theft of sheep or goats; 5, theft of dogs; 9, theft of birds; 7, theft of bees. For each of these offenses, the law goes into great detail. Then there are 113 articles relating to violence against persons, 20 of which provide for all varieties of mutilation, 24 for outrages against women, and so on. So it's true to say that violence and theft, that is, attacks on people and things, are the main preoccupation of the Salic Law. Admittedly, it is an indigestible heap, revealing on every page both the barbarity of a people in which acts of violence are frequent, and the crudeness of a legislator who, lacking the ability to generalize, formulates a new provision for each case he encounters. But in any case, security of life and security of property are the two principles around which all the articles of this primordial legislation of the Frankish people, still agrarian and catechumenal, unfold.

Let us now turn to the Declaration of the Rights of Man.

51 On the spirit of the Salic law, see *l'Introduction à l'étude historique du droit coutumier*, by HENRI BEAUNE.

Preamble

> The representatives of the French people, constituted as a national assembly, considering that ignorance, forgetfulness or contempt for human rights are the sole causes of public misfortune and corrupt governments, have resolved to set forth, in a solemn declaration, the natural, inalienable and sacred rights of man, so that this declaration, constantly present to all members of the social body, will constantly remind them of their rights and duties; so that the acts of the legislative power and those of the executive power, being able to be compared at every moment with the goal of any political institution, are more respected; so that the claims of the citizens, based henceforth on simple and indisputable principles, turn always to the maintenance of the Constitution and the happiness of all.
>
> Consequently, the *National Assembly recognizes and declares, in the presence and under the auspices of the Supreme Being, the following rights of man and citizen.*

Following this preamble, in which the vague and hollow expressions "In the presence and under the auspices of the Supreme Being" have replaced the all-warlike vivacity of the cry "Long live Christ who loves the Franks", the Declaration enumerates in 17 articles the various human rights or principles of '89 (mentioned above, p. 43-44). The Salic Law was criticized for failing to generalize; the Declaration of the Rights of Man has the opposite shortcoming; its articles are abstract formulas; "the *Social Contract*, from which they are drawn, has the authority of geometry; the National Assembly has built politics on the model of mathematics."[52]

These are the two fundamental Constitutions of the French people, when they were young and when they reached full maturity.

Well, we have no hesitation in saying that the child people were better inspired than the mature people. Its first Constitution, though shapeless, is a page of love, with Christ at its head; its second Constitution, though learned and philosophical, is a page of oblivion, with Christ gone. From the first, an ardent and loyal people will emerge; from the second, an oblique and unrecognizable people.

52 Taine, *l'Ancien régime*, p. 304, 305.

The first is a sap, the second, a volcano; one prepares the beehive to which the beautiful kingdom of France has been compared, the other prepares the whole Revolution and its rubble. When we read the first, we feel no apprehension, we even smell a perfume of security exhaling from it; its articles on the theft of pigs, the theft of oxen, the theft of bees, etc., at the same time as they are naïve, are precise, clear-cut; if there is a lack of synthesis, the mind is satisfied with these well-presented cases of crime: thieves will not be spared. But when you read the second, you're secretly terrified by these abstract, geometrically-formed articles, you'd think they were caves: the result will be crimes and legal theft; it will rightly be said that the Revolution is theft.

Let's imagine the founder of the French nation, the old hairy king, so irritated one day about the *Soissons vase*,[53] suddenly reappearing in the middle of the National Assembly of 1789: what a formidable blow from his francisca would he not have unloaded on the Declaration of the Rights of Man, a vase of misery and shame!

53 The historian Gregory of Tours reports that Clovis I, the king of the Franks, agreed to return a looted vase to the bishop of Rheims. After one of his own soldiers deliberately destroyed the vase, Clovis slew the man.

V

The destinies of the cornerstone and the destinies of official France separate.

The great French Assembly has laid the foundations for a new society without Christ. What is to become of Christ, seen as a cornerstone that has been discarded, and of official France, which no longer has him in its fundamental constitution?

First, Christ.

He is the cornerstone, the corner stone. We have referred to him several times in this famous phrase. Now is the time to explain it.

A brief architectural overview is in order: what is the cornerstone in an edifice, in a construction?

The corner of a house is formed, as can be seen at every step, by the junction of two walls. By meeting one another, two walls form an angle: you only have to look to understand. In this angle, the cornerstone is the solid ashlar which, laid and buried in the ground, supports the two walls on itself, allowing them to join, to reunite. Thanks to it, the two walls, the right and the left, meet, unite and persist in their union. This is the role of the cornerstone. As we can see, it's a role of reunion.

Applied to Jesus Christ, this locution meant that, since he was the Messiah, his role must have been to bring together and unite what was divided, what was distant, either from God to man, or from man to man. And indeed, did not Jesus Christ truly appear, in the imposing series of eighteen centuries, as the angle of love that had brought everything together? Judge for yourself:

In Him, had not these two families, one of which is the Most Holy Trinity, and the other humanity, united in a ravishing way? As the Church sings in one of her hymns of triumph, the Word of God having become flesh, these two houses, one of which is that of the Most High, and the other, very small, ours! were closely united. Participating in both, Christ became their angle of love!

Alto ex Olympi vertice

Summi Parentis Filius,
Ceu monte desectus lapis
Terras in imas decidens,
Domus supernæ, et infimæ,
Utrumque junxit angulum[54]
(*Hymn from the Office of the Dedication*, Roman Breviary).

He continues to play this role every day in the Catholic Church, where he unceasingly joins earth to heaven, making Christians children of God through his sacraments.

What's more, before the Revolution, wasn't Christ the angle of love in civil society itself? Had He not brought together, united, rich and poor, masters and slaves, Barbarians and peoples of Rome and Athens, the white race and the black race? In Him, all Adam's children bowed to one another, joining hearts and hands. Among them, alas! there have always been distances, contrasts, castes, enmities, extremes; but in Jesus Christ, these distances were erased, these contrasts were harmonized, these castes were melted, these enmities were softened, these extremes were touched: the attractive cornerstone had finally subjugated everything, had brought everything into loving union!

This is how the Christian nations came to be. Indeed, what were the Christian nations? Admirable communities of men and peoples united by faith, by tradition, by language, by morals, by soil, and also by the vocation to spread the truth, to enlighten nations less advanced towards God, and to bring them, at the price of labor and the chance of death, eternal goods, justice and civilization. But of all these glories of which the Christian nations were justly proud: of their faith, their traditions, their language, their mores, their soil, their vocation, was it not Christ who was their foundation? Wasn't He their meeting point?

And so, around Christ, the divine cornerstone, for eighteen cen-

54 "From highest heaven, the Father's Son,
Descending like that mystic stone
Cut from a mountain without hands,
Came down below, and filled all lands;
Uniting, midway in the sky,
His house on earth, and house on high."

turies, in a magnificent concert of balance and progress, this triple marvel had been formed and developed: the Catholic Church, the Christian nations, civilization.

But in 1789, France gave the signal for a new order of things, and in its inauguration, the cornerstone, Christ, was rejected.

What will become of the famous cornerstone? Will it remain in the scrap heap where the National Assembly has relegated it as useless? If it did, it would no longer be the *living stone*. That's its name again, in the Scriptures.[55] Any other stone is inert; moved, it remains in the corner where it is relegated; but this one is alive, it is not resigned to inertia! From the dawn of the centuries, this stone, though held in reserve, has been the driving force behind empires. *At the head of the book of the world it is written of me*;[56] empires arranged and disarranged themselves in preparation for its reception.[57] And now that she has manifested herself and, visible in the conjunction of ancient and new centuries, has vanquished the pagan chaos and, for the eyes of men and angels, brought forth these marvels called the Catholic Church, Christianity and civilization, do we imagine that she will submit to a state of discardedness and inertia? Think again, proud legislators of '89. The *living stone*, humble in its foundations which are the crib and the cross, is proud in its edifice which is the Catholic or universal Church. You no longer want her at the foundation of the new society and modern nations: heaven will make other arrangements in her favor. What other arrangements?

The inspired Book of Job hints at them:

"The Lord spoke to Job from the midst of a whirlwind and said to him: *Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Do you know who laid the cornerstone, when the morning stars were all praising me, and the angels were shouting for joy?*"[58]

So when the Creator laid the cornerstone of the world, Christ,

55 "Drawing near to him as to the living stone... "(I Peter, 2:4).

56 Psalm 39:8.

57 Bossuet has magnificently presented this revolution of empires in view of Christ. Part III of the *Discours sur l'histoire universelle.*

58 Job 38:4, 6-7.

the supreme goal of creation, the morning stars and the angels vied with each other in praise and rejoicing. And throughout the ages, it has been the custom of the ancients always to place the cornerstone of buildings amidst songs and the sound of instruments, as if to recall and perpetuate the honor paid to the divine cornerstone of the world.[59]

Well, you don't need to be a prophet to announce that these transports of joy and these testimonies of honor will be repeated with regard to the Rebuke of '89. You no longer wanted Him as the cornerstone of your new edifice, you imprudent architects: heaven will know how to make new arrangements for Him in its turn. This living stone will move away from the government of France, which discarded it, away from Christianity, which no longer exists; it will move, and attract peoples in a different way. *New earth*, *new heavens*,[60] will organize themselves around her, will enter into conjunction with her: it will take time, she will take her time! But the day will come when cries of joy, songs and the sound of instruments will once again be heard; and the peroration of world history will see a renewal of the same celebration as at its genesis: the morning stars and the choirs of angels applauded the placement of the divine cornerstone; the applause will begin again, for it is ineradicable. And while Christ and his Church preside over ever more extensive, ever more glorious destinies, may heaven grant that, in contrast to the shouts of joy and the sound of instruments, the cries of pain and the crash of collapses are not shared by guilty governments and peoples!...

59 1 Esdras 3:10-11. — Zacharias 4:7.

60 Isaiah 65:17.

VI

What this separation will mean for France.

Alas, at the very moment when official France was about to reject the Christ of its fundamental Constitution, the phenomenon that almost always accompanies great mistakes occurred: illusion. The *Moniteur* has preserved traces of this illusion in a dithyramb in honor of the night of the *4th of August*,[61] in which impiety vies with fever and drunkenness: the accents would not have been more enthusiastic had it been a question of celebrating the sacred night on which the Savior of the world was born:

"In one night, the face of France changed; the old order of things that force had maintained, *despite the opposition of a hundred generations*, was overthrown.

"In one night, the famous tree of feudalism, whose shadow covered the whole of France, was uprooted.

"In one night, the farmer became the equal of the man who, by virtue of his ancient scrolls, drank the sweat and devoured the fruit of his labors. Man has reclaimed the place that *nature* and *reason* once gave him.

"In one night, the long enterprises of the court of Rome, its abuses, its greed, have found an end and an insurmountable barrier that *wisdom and human reason* have just set up for eternity.

61 On the night of August 4, all the members of the National Assembly, hard at work making ruins, decreed the following:

Art. I. — The National Assembly entirely destroys the feudal system.

Art. II — All pecuniary, personal or real privileges in the matter of subsidies are abolished forever.

Art. III. — A national constitution and public liberty being more advantageous to the provinces than privileges, it is declared that all particular privileges of the provinces are abolished without return.

Art. IV — All citizens, without distinction of birth, may be admitted to all ecclesiastical, civil and military positions and dignities, and no profession will be exempt.

Art. V. — In the future, no money will be sent to the Court of Rome for *annates* or any other reason whatsoever.

"In one night, the triple power of feudalism, aristocracy and parliament has been annihilated.

"In one night, France was *saved, regenerated*.[62]

What fever, what delirium! And what an illusion! Doesn't it seem as if we're glimpsing a mad white doe who, having crossed and abandoned the protective park, is drunkenly enjoying her freedom at the very moment when, with the shadows of night descending, the wild beasts lie in wait and are about to devour her? O poor France, which repudiates its ancient Christian constitution and, by the most sacrilegious abuse of words, proclaims itself *saved, regenerated*, you had become, however, the white nation of Christ on a Christmas night, at the baptism of Clovis: and now, this memory weighs heavily on you!

Bossuet wrote in his great style: "There are fundamental laws that cannot be changed"; violating them shakes all the foundations of the earth. It is then that the nations seem to stagger as if troubled and taken with wine, as the prophets speak. The spirit of vertigo possesses them and their fall is inevitable: because the peoples have violated the laws, changed public law, and broken the most solemn pacts."[63] The eagle of Meaux foresaw and signaled the wavering of empires, in the hypothesis that fundamental laws would come to be changed; but what would he have thought, what would he have announced, if he could have foreseen that a day was to come when the very support of fundamental laws, Christ, would be removed and rejected! Here are the rigorous consequences of collapse that will be deduced, in time, from the unholy uprooting carried out by the National Assembly:

Rejected from the fundamental constitution of France, Christ will then be rejected from public laws, then from State institutions, then from State morals, then, inevitably, by virtue of the State's omnipotence, from private institutions, from private morals: and then, with the cornerstone nowhere to be found, what will become of France, and what will become of France? We'll feel ourselves wavering, faltering; we'll feel ourselves disjointed, dying! Everything will go

62 *Moniteur*, 1789, no. 33.

63 BOSSUET, *Polit, tirée de l'Écrit.*, Book I, article IV, proposition VIII.

through this formidable wobble, everything will undergo this mortal dislocation; and it will not occur to the hardened legislators of unfortunate revolutionized France to say to one another: Let's take back the cornerstone!...[64]

To make matters worse, a fearsome auxiliary will help this disintegration, and France herself will have called him into her bosom! an auxiliary of ruins whose entire past the National Assembly will have thought it necessary to amnesty. Indeed, at the very moment when it repudiated the divine cornerstone, the Assembly, in an incredible, distressing, impious contrast, admitted the Jewish enemy of Christ as a citizen. Let's examine this masterpiece of imperialism and short-sightedness.

64 "Thirty years ago, there was a nation governed by an ancient race of kings, according to the most perfect constitution that ever existed, and according to laws that could have been believed, more rightly than those of the ancient Romans, to have come down from heaven, so wise, pure, beneficent and favorable to humanity were they. This nation, famous for its frankness, gentleness and enlightenment, for its love of its sovereigns and of the religion to which it owed fourteen centuries of glory and happiness, flourished in peace in the midst of Europe, whose envy it aroused, and whose ornament it made, by the beauty of its legislation, by the noble politeness of its morals, and by the dazzling masterpieces of every kind with which letters, science and the arts had enriched it in concert. Happy at home, respected abroad, her widespread renown drew tributes from the most distant lands, and the universe admired her as the queen of civilization.

"Such were the people God chose to teach the human race a great and terrible lesson. Suddenly, at the voice of a few sophists, new opinions and new desires take hold of this misguided people. They are disgusted with their beliefs and the tutelary doctrines that had lifted them so high. Tempted by the fruit of the *tree of science*, they want to leave their condition and *become like God*, to whom alone belongs all sovereignty. Suddenly, this attack is punished, like that of the first man, by an *irrevocable death sentence*, which the culprit himself is charged with carrying out."

Who wrote this? Lamennais in 1836 (*Indifférence*, t. I). We don't agree with him that the death warrant is irrevocable. There are too many saints in heaven who, along with the Virgin Mary, have appealed for mercy! But the punishment continues, long and poignant.

Chapter III
A War Machine in Jewish Hands

I

The Declaration of the Rights of Man becomes a war machine in Jewish hands. French society drew its inspiration for the Revolution from the paganism condemned by the Gospel; the Trojan horse, an ancient war machine, will make it understand what happened to the Jews.

From the Declaration of Human Rights were to come unpleasant surprises, along with evils. "One is punished where one has sinned"; the guilty, be they nations or individuals, justified, by their setbacks and misfortunes, the truth of the old adage. French society, at odds with Christ, will find its punishment in its very Constitution: the Jewish preponderance that will emerge from it will be the punishment of the *Rights of Man*.

A martyr of the Revolution, a veritable standard of contradiction for the new times, Pope Pius VI, declared that "the Rights of Man or principles of '89 were no less opposed to civil society than to religion, ILLA SCILICET JURA ET RELIGIONI ET SOCIETATI ADVERSANTIA." It would be easy to draw up a long list of disasters and calamities that have befallen civil society; but our task here must be limited to pointing out the calamity of the Hebrew invasion.

How can a wrathful Providence allow the Jews to become the punishment for the Rights of Man?

In that this disastrous Constitution, proclaimed to be the new, unique basis of society, will be transformed into a war machine in their hands.

War machine! is indeed the appropriate term. In the past, this name was given to instruments and constructions used to breach walls and provide cover for besiegers. The ancients were very skillful at building and directing these machines; the invention of gunpowder

has completely lost their use. But the Jews found their way back to the famous Declaration of Rights: they used it to knock down walls, first in France, and to dismantle society everywhere, but with cover!

At the end of the last century, society was drunk with paganism: we have already described this degeneration.[65]

Everyone was raving about the Greeks and Romans, and the French Revolution had exploded, taking Brutus and the fierce followers of Rome and Sparta as its models, after the court of Louis XIV had debased itself in mythological pleasures. It seems that this ungrateful society, which in its ideas and tendencies had taken up the side of paganism against the Gospel, was reserved a means of punishment inscribed in the most famous splendors of paganism: the war machine known as the *Trojan horse*.

What the perfidious wooden horse was for Priam's light-hearted city, the Declaration of the Rights of Man will be for French society. What stiffness must have existed in the contours of this horse! But didn't your constitution of the Rights of Man, you unfortunate legislators of '89, this constitution with its abstract, geometric forms, present the same stiffness and the same danger?[66]

The Trojan horse episode may be implausible, but it doesn't matter! Didn't Virgil's poetry give it immortality?[67] And then, what seemed to belong only to Fable has become, since the Revolution, the most poignant of realities: for, if fables are the history of rude

65 Read, in *Entrée des Israélites*, pages 258-262.

66 "In accordance with the precepts of the reigning ideology, politics is built on the model of mathematics . The new social code has the authority of geometry; that's why it is valid, like geometry, at all times, in all places, for all people: its establishment is a matter of right. Whoever stands in its way is the enemy of mankind; government, aristocracy, clergy, whoever it may be, must be brought down." (TAINE, *L'Ancien Régime*.)

67 "This epoch of the ruin of Troy, which occurred around 308 years after the departure from Egypt, and 1174 years after the Flood, is considerable, both because of the importance of such a great event celebrated by the two greatest poets of Greece and Italy, and because we can relate to this date what is most remarkable about the times called fabulous or heroic: fabulous, because of the fables with which the stories of these times are wrapped; heroic, because of those whom the poets have called gods and heroes. " (BOSSUET, *Disc, sur l'hist. univ.*, Part I.)

times, isn't it fair to say that catastrophes which have something of the fabulous are the history of times of decadence and apostasy?

Let's take a look at the two warmachines: the one of yesteryear and the one of today.

II

Virgil's account of the perfidious horse entering the walls of Troy: the Greeks came out of it; the modern Hebrews came out of the Declaration of the Rights of Man

Before translating Virgil's beautiful verses, it may be useful to remind the reader of what happened at Troy.

The city had been under siege for ten years. At the end of this time, the Greeks pretended to withdraw and left a huge wooden horse on the shore, in whose flanks their strongest warriors had hidden. The Trojans, believing that this colossus had been raised to satisfy a vow, brought it inside their walls. During the night, the Greeks emerged from the sides of the machine, opened the gates of the city to their companions and delivered Troy to the plunder.

Now for Virgil's verses:[68]

68 Ducendum ad sedes simulacrum orandaque divæ
Numina conclamant.
Dividimus muros et mœnia pandimus urbis.
Accingunt omnes operi pedibusque rotarum
Aubjiciunt lapsus, et stuppea vincula collo
Intendunt. scandit fatalis machina muros,
Foeta armis; pueri circum innuptæque puellæ
Sacra canunt, funemque manu contingere gaudent.
Illa subit, mediæque minans illabitur urbi.
O patria, o divum domus Ilium et incluta bello
Mœnia Dardanidum! quater ipso in limine portæ
Substitit atque utero sonitum quater arma dedere.
Instamus tamen immemores cæcique furore,
Et monstrum infelix sacrata sistimus arce…
Vertitur interea cælum et ruit Oceano nox
Involvens umbra magna terramque polumque
Myrmidonumque dolos ; fusi per mœnia Teucri
Conticuere ; sopor fessos complectitur artus...
Inclusos utero Danaos et pinea furtim
Laxat claustra Sinon. Illos patefactus ad auras
Reddit equus…
Invadunt urbem somno vinoque sepultam:

We are of the opinion that the colossus should be taken to the home of Pallas, and that we should implore the protection of the goddess: such is the general cry. We breach our ramparts, we open the city walls.

Wheels slide under the horse's feet and cables tighten around its neck. Young boys and girls surround it, singing hymns and touching the ropes.

She advances, menacingly slipping into the heart of the city. O my homeland! to Ilion, abode of the gods; ramparts of the Trojans, famous for war! Four times she stopped on the very threshold of the gates, and four times the sound of weapons echoed in her flanks. But we continue unmoved, and place the fatal monster within the sacred walls of the citadel.

However, night rises from the bosom of the ocean, shrouding the earth, the sky and the wiles of the Greeks in a thick shadow. The city falls silent, and sleep seizes the weary limbs of its defenders...

A traitor stealthily frees the Greeks locked in their wooden prison, and opens the horse's haunches to bring them back into the light; from this dark lair, the principal chiefs joyfully emerge, sliding along a cable. They invaded the city, buried in wine and sleep, massacred the sentries, and, opening the gates, received all their companions and rallied to their

Cæduntur vigiles, portisque patentibus omnis
Accipiunt socios atque agmina conscia jungunt.
Tempus erat quo prima quies mortalibus ægris
Incipit et dono divum gratissima serpit.
in somnis, ecce, ante oculos mæstissimus Hector
visus adesse mihi largosque effundere fletus...
Hostis habet muros...
Si Pergama dextra
Defendi possent, etiam hac defensa fuissent...
Arduus armatos mediis in mœnibus astans
Fundit equus
Quis cladem illius noctis, quis funera fando
Explicet aut possit lacrimis æquare labores?
Urbs antiqua ruit multos dominata per annos ;
Ac veluti summis antiquam in montibus ornum
Quum ferro accisam crebrisque bipennibus instant
Eruere agricolæ certatim, illa usque minatur
Et tremefacta comam concusso vertice nutat,
Vulneribus donec paulatim evicta supremum
Congemuit traxitque jugis avulsa ruinam.

conspired battalions.

It was the hour when the first sleep begins for unfortunate mortals, and, by a boon from the gods, insinuates itself with such charm into their senses. Then, in a dream, I thought I saw Hector appear to me, overwhelmed with sadness and shedding copious tears, uttering deep groans; he said to me: "Ah! flee, son of a goddess, and hide from the flames that are kindling, the enemy holds our walls! If Troy could be defended by the arm of a mortal, this arm would have defended it!"

The menacing horse, erect in the midst of our ramparts, spews forth streams of combatants.

How can we put into words the disasters and massacres of that night? Who could pay a just tribute of tears to such misfortunes? The ancient city that had reigned supreme for so many years crumbled... So it is when, on the mountain tops, woodcutters, iron in hand, strive over and over to cut down an ancient ash tree: under the redoubled blows of the axe, the tree long threatens and sways its trembling foliage with every jerk, until, gradually exhausted by its wounds, it utters a final groan and falls torn from the mountain top.

Such, in part, is Virgil's vivid description: let's move on to the sons of Jacob.

The Jews will emerge from the *Declaration of Human Rights* just as the Greeks emerged from the monster's flanks.

Let's take the most vivid lines from the great poet's story:

We breach our walls, and open the city precinct. — In 1789, the imprudent French Assembly itself breached the walls, opening the enclosure through which the Jews would enter and take over many things.

The fatal machine crossed the walls, carrying war in its flanks. — The constitution of the *Rights of Man* is indeed a fatal machine, and the striking expression used by the poet suits it all too well: *foeta armis*, carrying war in its flanks. Is it not from her murderous fecundity that the Terror, the Commune, bloody battles, domineering Judaism

and many other calamitous surprises will emerge?

Young boys and girls surround her, singing hymns and touching the ropes. — Alas! what hymns have not been sung at civic festivals in honor of the "Free Constitution." Long lines of young women and girls, dressed in white gowns, decked out in the colors of the nation, preceded by drums and kettledrums, marched to the temple, escorted by citizen cohorts; and after thanking the heavens for the conquest of liberty, came to the Hôtel de Ville to pay homage to the heroes of the Revolution.[69]

The machine advanced, and slid menacingly into the heart of the city. — Into the heart! This was precisely what Louis XVI wanted to avoid. His plan was to kindly welcome the Israelites into civil society, but to keep them, as it were, on the frontiers of society. On the contrary, with the help of the Constitution of the Rights of Man, they would advance to the heart...

Four times she stopped on the very threshold of the gates, and four times the sound of arms rang in her flanks. — Several times too, as we shall enumerate below, the question of the emancipation of the Jews in the name of the rights of man, brought to the bar of the Constituent Assembly, was literally stopped on the threshold of the session room. The Assembly was frightened, and seemed to hear a sinister noise. Concerned, it kept sending her back, and sent her back up to fourteen times.

But we carry on unmoved, and place the fatal monster within the sacred precincts of the citadel. — In the last hour of the Constituent Assembly's existence, all emotion ceased; the fatal decision was promulgated amidst a gloomy silence: In the name of human rights, Jews are citizens!

The enemy holds the walls!... what a cry! — It would be the terrifying cry of Christian society a few years later. Throughout Alsace,

69 *Moniteur*, no. 33.

this impression of terror would circulate: "*The Estates General have issued a decree admitting Jews as citizens, and declaring them capable of all offices and employment. O misfortune, misfortune for our homeland! Drive them out, otherwise we're all lost!*"[70]

The menacing horse, standing in the middle of our ramparts, vomited streams of fighters. — What impure streams of fighters will we not see coming out of this infernal Constitution of '89: Jacobins, Communards, Socialists, Freethinkers, Atheists and, in such bad company, alas, the Israelites.

This ancient city is crumbling... — It's all over for the Christian homelands too, unless the Almighty stretches out his arm!...

In truth, wouldn't you say that the poetically inspired author of the fourth eclogue was also a bit of a prophet in his account of the Trojan horse? Raise your heads, you who smile: do you not see around you and above you, emerging from every avenue, crowning every height, both the Hebrew tribes and the socialist hordes, silently completing the conquest of French society? In 1789, all these consequences were still shrouded and concealed in the premises of the sinister Declaration, as the Greeks were, in the flanks of the monster!

70 *Rapport lu à la Société des Amis de la Constitution, le 27 février 1790, sur la question de l'état civil des juifs d'Alsace*, p. 29.

III

BY WHOM THIS DISASTROUS MACHINE OF HUMAN RIGHTS WAS BUILT; WHAT HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS SUGGEST.

But who built this disastrous machine of human rights? We've been talking about it for two chapters now, without having researched its genesis; now is the time to ask: who built it?

A mystery!

Brought before the National Assembly to be voted on and accepted, it has never revealed its true birthplace.

At the origin of the fundamental constitutions of peoples, at the cradle of legislation, we find names which, like ancient oaks, shade these laws at the same time as they immortalize their authors: next to the Decalogue, Moses ; for the legislation of Athens, Solon; for the legislation of Sparta, Lycurgus; for the legislation of Crete, Minos; for Roman legislation, Numa. Here, nothing of the sort. No proper, radiant name can be invoked: it's a product, an offspring on which must be inscribed this impure, dark designation: *Legion*! Unless, of course, we prefer to refer to it with the disdain that once fell from Voltaire's lips: *I'd rather obey a beautiful lion than two hundred rats of my own kind!*

Indeed, in the making of this hybrid work, alongside the patriotism and good faith of a few, the perfidy and conspiracy of a larger number, and the anxiety and ignorance of the majority, have come together. There were masterminds and ringleaders. Here is what the documents have allowed us to gather as authentic:

a) As soon as the Estates-General were convened by Louis XVI in 1789, France sent its cahiers, as well as its appointed representatives. The cahiers were a compilation of the nation's grievances and wishes, in which the points calling for reform were brought to the attention of the king and the meeting of deputies. There were cahiers of the clergy, cahiers of the nobles, cahiers of the third estate, and, because of the importance of the capital, the cahier of the city of Paris.[71]

71 The use of cahiers dates back to 1355. The deputies of the third estate knelt to present them to the King; those of the clergy and nobility remained standing and uncovered.

Or,

With regard to the need for a Constitution expressed in many of these cahiers, the cahier of the city of Paris alone instructs its representatives to demand, as a preamble, a declaration of the *Rights of the Nation:*

"They are expressly enjoined not to consent to any subsidy, to any loan, until the Declaration of the Rights of the Nation has been passed into law."[72] This Declaration of the Rights of the Nation follows.

Among the clergy's cahiers, several also demand "*that, before anything else, a general and fundamental law be promulgated, which positively states and declares the principal rights of citizens, provinces and the Nation.*"[73]

So, as yet, only the rights of the *Nation*, of *citizens*, were being discussed, with little or no mention of the rights of *man*.[74]

b) Suddenly, the term "rights of the Nation" was replaced by another, superior term: the Estates General were asked to define the rights of "man" and of the citizen. As a result, the work of the Assembly was no longer directed towards a specific French goal: it was a universal, abstract goal.

No one was mistaken: this new name was borrowed from Rousseau's *Social Contract* and *Emile*. The philosopher from Geneva became the pontiff of the Revolution. Someone has said "*that the human race had lost its titles, and that Rousseau made it regain them*;" isn't it a hundred times more accurate to say, thinking of the beautiful surprises that were to come out of the flanks of this machine of human rights, "that French society had very good titles, recognized as such, and that Rousseau made it lose them"?

c) But to whom do we attribute this transformation from "rights

72 *Moniteur*, 1789, p. 216. — BUCHEZ ET ROUX, *Hist. parlementaire de la Révolution fr.*, t. I, p. 336.

73 BUCHEZ ET ROUX, t. I, p. 325.

74 A cahier de la noblesse makes a vague mention of this. deputies from a small locality (Clermont-en-Beauvaisis, county seat, near Beauvais) were asked to insist "above all, that a declaration of the rights of men be made, establishing their liberty, their property and their security." BUCHEZ ET ROUX, t. I, p. 329.

of the Nation" to "rights of man"?

M. le comte de Clermont-Tonnerre had been chosen to examine the cahiers des provinces, and asked to present a summary to the National Assembly. He read out his report in the session of July 27, 1789. Dividing the cahiers into two main categories, those calling for the maintenance of the existing constitution, with correction of abuses, and those desiring a new constitution, he pronounced, with regard to the latter, this resounding sentence:

"*Those, Messieurs, believed that the first chapter of the Constitution should contain the Declaration of the Rights of Man, those imprescriptible rights for the maintenance of which the Society was established.*"

Now, which cahiers made this request? From which provinces, which seneschalties, which bailiwicks, did these cahiers come? We've never been able to find out, and it would perhaps have been embarrassing to list them.[75] This substitution of the supposed demand for a declaration of the rights of man, for the demand for a declaration of the rights of the nation or of the citizen contained in the cahiers, is a capital thing in the history of France. Was this ever done? Were the cahiers asking for a declaration of human rights, or were they not? Let's check it out at the vengeful hour of this centenary! Monsieur le Comte, if you have introduced this substitution into the cahiers de France, you have done great damage to our poor France!

Of all the presidents of the Assembly who sat on the Constituent Assembly, the Comte de Clermont-Tonnerre was the most favorable to the Jews. They took advantage of his turn as president to present or advance their petitions.

d) Following Comte de Clermont-Tonnerre's report, a committee was appointed to draft a *Declaration of the Rights of Man*, and to receive drafting proposals from all over France.

So, who was the promoter of the all-too-famous *Declaration of Rights* that has governed France for a hundred years?

75 Why did M. THIERS deem it appropriate to reject in the notes at the end of his volume M. DE CLERMONT-TONNERRE'S report on the Cahiers, which is such a serious and vital document? (See THIERS, *Histoire de la Révolution française*, t. I, note 4, p. 354-63).

Officially, one or other of these three figures, along with Mirabeau, who put the finishing touches to the drafting work:

La Fayette

"The first idea had been provided by la Fayette, who had borrowed it from the Americans. Thiers, *Histoire de la Révolution*, t. IL p. 150-1. -When the Marquis de la Fayette had read his draft Declaration of Rights to the National Assembly during the session of July 11, 1789, the Comte de Lally-Tolendal, succeeding him at the podium, said: "*The author of the motion speaks of liberty as he knew how to defend it.*" (Universal applause.) *Moniteur*, 1789, no. 17. - *Histoire parlementaire de la Révolution française*, Buchez et Roux, vol. II, p. 79.

Mounier

The committee charged with preparing the work of the Constitution had appointed Mounier rapporteur of the *preamble*, i.e. the Declaration of Rights. Mounier read his report in the session of July 9, thus paving the way for La Fayette, who did not make his motion until the 11th. Mounier proposed the question to the Assembly, in the following order: Declaration of human rights; principles of monarchy; rights of the nation; rights of the king; rights of citizens under the French government. (*Moniteur*, no. 16.)

Siéyès

This famous abbé, with his geometric mind and dry, metaphysical way of discussing, was in fact the *metaphysician* of the Revolution. He found the formulas that Mirabeau's eloquence fertilized. As a member of the Constitution Committee, he presented a draft that was rejected on account of its metaphysical obscurity, but which, when printed, exerted a considerable influence on people's minds: *Préliminaires de la Constitution française, suivis d'une reconnaissance et exposition des droits de l'homme*, 1789. Siéyès may therefore have preceded Mounier and la Fayette in this conception.

The Marquis de la Fayette, the lawyer Mounier and the Abbé

Siéyès all belonged to secret societies.[76]

e) Officially, as we said, they were the promoters of the *Declaration of Rights* before the National Assembly; for it is now perfectly well established that, before being presented to the Estates-General, the draft *Declaration of the Rights of Man* had been conceived and elaborated in the *lodges of secret societies*, not only in France, but also abroad. The conscientious and revealing works of P. Deschamps shed irrefutable light on this point. Let us quote two passages:

> One day, in the salon of the Count de Nicolaï, first president of the Paris Chamber of Accounts, shortly after the opening of the Estates General, a discussion arose on the question of whether France had a Constitution: did it need one? would it have one?
>
> This was the theme of the discussion, in which deputies from the right, such as Maury and Cazalès, philosophers such as La Harpe and Marmontel, and other lesser-known men took part. On the sidelines stood a rather silent figure who was said to belong to Masonic societies and to know their secrets. But why a written constitution? said the members of the right; France has one that the centuries have built up little by little, and with which it is doing very well. England alone has a clearly formulated constitution," replied the supporters of new ideas.
>
> The conversation continued in this tone, when the silent figure stood up and confidently uttered the following words: "*We don't need a constitution, it's true; but we're going to have one, and this constitution will travel around the world. It will go all the way to Russia, all the way to Constantinople.*"[77]

The other passage is no less significant:

> Under the direction of the Grand-Orient, in Paris, the lodge

76 DESCHAMPS, *les Sociétés secrètes*, t. II, p. 138, 139, 148. — Mounier, appalled by the events of October 5TH and 6TH, 1789, resigned as a deputy, left France in 1790 and did not return until after [Napoleon's coup on] 18 Brumaire. He published, among other works: *De l'influence attribuée aux philosophes, aux francs-maçons, aux illuminés, sur la Révolution de France*, Tubingue, 1801.

77 DESCHAMPS, t. III, *Notes et documents recueillis* by M. CLAUDIO JANNET, p. 76-77.

known as the *Reunited Friends* [Amis réunis] was more specifically responsible for foreign correspondence. They were also known as *philalèthes* or seekers of truth. To further impose itself on the public, this lodge had also become the lodge of aristocratic pleasure and luxury. While the senior brothers, along with the women who had also become adepts, danced and sang in the common room about their equality and freedom, they were unaware that above them was *a secret committee* where everything was being prepared to soon extend this equality beyond the lodge, over ranks and fortunes, castles and thatched cottages, marquises and bourgeois.

It was really above the common lodge that was another lodge called the *Secret Committee of Reunited Friends*. As long as the party lasted on the lower floor, two terrible brothers with swords, one at the bottom of the stairs, the other by the door, defended the entrance to this new sanctuary. This was where the archives of the secret correspondence were kept; even the man to whom all the packets from the *brothers in Germany* and *Italy* were addressed was not allowed to cross the threshold. He didn't know the number of letters; he was simply in charge of delivering them. They came to be received, and the secret remained with the committee.

At the time of the opening of the Estates General, all the Masonic convents were convoked in Paris by this steering committee. They dealt with *work that prudence had forbidden to entrust to paper, and even less to printing*... The cahiers of 1789 had brought to the Estates General the expression of the provinces' attachment to the Catholic faith and monarchical government. The united lodges took their revenge for the drafting of these cahiers...[78]

e) Finally, when the *Declaration of the Rights of Man* was prepared and drafted in the lodges, and brought before the National Assembly, Masonic action was once again felt. Stormy debates ensued, during which "the people, through their tax refusals, the rabble through their crimes, the demagogues of the districts through their disorganizing motions, translated in their own way the human rights discussed at the National Assembly. Twenty-eight out of thirty Assembly bureaux had rejected them. *They were adopted in public discussion, under threats from the tribunes*."[79]

78 DESCHAMPS, *les Soc. secr.* t. II, p. 115-17, p. 137-8. The secret committee of these lodges was chaired by Abbé *Siéyès* (p. 138).

79 POUJOULAT, *Hist. de la Révolution française.*

Doesn't all these documents shed a great deal of light on how the Declaration of Rights came about? Were we wrong to think that it was fashioned like a war machine? These drafting conspiracies, this work in the lodges, these threats from the tribunes - how reminiscent of the dull thud of weapons that resounded in the flanks of the wooden horse when it was introduced into the citadel enclosure:

Quater ipso in limine portae
Substitit, atque utero sonitum quater arma dedere.

However, one point remains to be clarified: were Jews involved in the creation of this machine of rights?

That the Jews had a direct influence on the drafting of human rights, no, of course not;

But indirect influence is possible;

There is no formal proof, but here are some presumptions:

a) It seems that some of them were aware of what was being prepared, since, as early as the end of 1787, the Israelite Cerfbeer (the leader of the siege of Strasbourg),[80] whom we will soon see again on the scene, expressed himself in these terms, in a request addressed to Louis XVI: "*The suppliant hopes that a public law will no longer leave any pretext either for the city of Strasbourg, or for any other city, to treat an unfortunate nation with such rigor, and that no more special pardons will be needed so that the Jews can be among Your Majesty's subjects*." The request ended, near the end, with the words: "A Jew is more of a man than he is a Jew."[81]

Was Cerfberr aware of the human rights thesis through his reading of Rousseau's books, or through his relations with several of the main leaders of the Revolution? The documents we provide in the following chapters lead us more towards the second hypothesis.

80 See *l'Entrée des Israélites dans la Société française*. Book I, Chapters VI and VII.

IMPORTANT NOTE. - In our book: *l'Entrée des Israélites dans la Société française*, CERFBEER's name is spelled with two e's and one r. A slight modification must be made. Autograph letters of this person, since found, establish the spelling of his name as follows: CERFBERR.

81 Archives nationales, O^1, 610.

b) Jewish links with secret societies were becoming very close.[82] In particular, it was the *Philalethes* or the *Reunited Friends* lodge which led the revolutionary movement of 1789 in the capital; we have just established this in the preceding pages, according to P. Deschamps. If not of Jewish origin, this sect of the Philalethes may well have had, from the outset, a very pronounced inclination for the circumcised gentry.[83] Moreover, this lodge of the Philalethes or United Friends was responsible for correspondence with foreign countries, with brothers in Germany, England and elsewhere. One of the most prominent and listened-to brothers in 1789 was Dohm, from Berlin, who in 1781 wrote the book *De la réforme de la situation politique des juifs*, which we said "was, in its occult influence, the counterpart of Rousseau's *Social Contract*."[84] The entire theory of humanitarianism or human rights is laid out in advance. This is a crucial point.

c) Finally (something that has not been noticed enough), the vow expressed in the Cahiers of 1789, especially in those of the city of Paris, was, as we reported above, a declaration of the rights "of the Nation" or "of the citizens." Why, then, did the desire for a more general declaration of "human" rights suddenly come to the fore? Would it be foolhardy to think that the cause of the Jews was not absolutely unrelated to this substitution? Wouldn't powerful friends like Clermont-Tonnerre, Mirabeau and Grégoire have been able to introduce it through this circuitous route? Indeed, it is remarkable that, had the question been maintained in its original terms, "rights of the Nation, of citizens", the Jews would have had nothing to do

82 See *L'Entrée des Israélites dans la Société française*, book III, chap. VI, § 4 and 5.

83 "In the second half of the eighteenth century, a person whose real name is unknown, but who called himself Eyrénée Philalèthe, traveled through France, England, Holland and America, talking about a new humanitarian religion that was to be established. His writings have a pronounced Judaic flavor. It is obviously not without some antecedent connection that this appellation of Philalèthe is taken at the beginning of the eighteenth century by the group of the Englishman Toland (very favorable to the Jews) and later by the most advanced elements of the other sects." (Deschamps, *Les Sociétés secrètes*, t. III, p. 35.)

84 See *l'Entrée des Israélites*, etc., Book III, Chap. VII, § 4.

with it, nothing to claim. They would not have been allowed to claim, especially with the insistence we shall describe, the benefit of rights, being neither citizens nor natives of the French nation. They would easily have been turned down.

For these reasons, it is not altogether improbable that they were indirectly involved in the construction of the ill-fated machine. However, beyond these presumptions, nothing can be confirmed. What is certain, however, is that with their usual perceptiveness, they understood at once the profit they were going to be able to make from the resounding Declaration. To sum up:

The Greeks built the wooden horse themselves, and hid in it to surprise the Trojans;

The Jews assisted in the construction of the Rights of Man, perhaps pushed it, and when it was finished, ambushed it, and went on to surprise every country.

IV

The most elementary precautions of prudence neglected, alas! by the Constituent Assembly and its successor governments.

Although dangerous in itself, the Declaration of Rights could have avoided becoming a war machine turned against society, if precautions had been taken. But precisely the most elementary precautions were neglected. The unfortunate city of Troy is still the epitome of such carelessness. Only, in Troy, the precautions were only slight; in France, the negligence was criminal.

In fact, two of these precautions were essential, and not only were they not taken, they were carefully avoided.

The first was the idea of *duties* to be recalled alongside *rights*. One cannot exist without the other. Even philosophy and morality agree that the notion of duty precedes the notion of right. The former is simpler, the latter more complex. *Every right stems from a duty*, but not every duty has a corresponding right.

Had this precaution been taken, had a declaration of duties at least accompanied that of rights, the way would have been barred to the Jews. Indeed, as *l'Histoire parlementaire de la Révolution française* wisely observes: "Suppose that, instead of its Declaration, the National Assembly had proclaimed the principle that has always been the origin of social organizations, namely: How different would its career have been? Then, the opponents, whoever they were, would have been asked *what duties they were fulfilling* - None, they would have replied. - *So you have no rights*."[85] What duties do you fulfill? the Jews would similarly have been asked. - None," they would have replied. - So don't demand rights; wait for them to be granted to you in moderation. They were stopped!

This safeguard provided by the notion of duty did not escape the notice of a number of members of the National Assembly, even the most enthusiastic.[86] In the extremely tumultuous (morning) session of

85 Buchez et Roux, *His. parlem, de la Récol. fr.*, t. III, Preface, p. 3.

86 Abbé Grégoire was one of them. He said from the rostrum: "It is

August 4, 1789, a deputy, M. Camus,[87] having proposed adding the word *duty* to the Declaration of Rights, the room suddenly resounded with applause from the clergy, while a veritable hurricane erupted from the ranks of the opposition. The Bishop of Chartres rose to his feet, struggled to maintain silence, but was finally able to utter the following words: "If a declaration of rights is necessary, there is a pitfall to be avoided. We run the risk of arousing egoism and pride. The flattering expression of *rights* must be skilfully spared; it should be accompanied by the corrective expression of *duties*. The entire clergy renews its applause. Shouts and stamping of feet came from elsewhere. The Chairman put Mr. Camus' proposal to the vote, as an amendment to the main question. The amendment was rejected by 570 votes to 433.[88]

That's it, the Jews can pass: there's nothing left in the Declaration to stop them.

Only the clergy, along with the jurist Camus, were concerned about the future!

Another precaution, more elementary, more important, the most important of all, was consciously and willfully neglected, first by the Constituent Assembly, and later by the governments, all without exception, that were to follow in the wake of the revolution. We'll be recalling this culpable omission more than once in the course of our narrative, because it was the crucial error that accompanied the Declaration of the Rights of Man. It can be stated as follows:

While this Declaration of Rights will introduce and implant Jews as citizens among the populations of France and elsewhere,

mainly essential to make a declaration of duties, to keep men within the limits of their rights; we are always inclined to extend them; and duties are neglected, disregarded and forgotten. We need to establish a balance; we need to show man the circle he can cover, and the barriers that can and must stop him. Many have argued to the contrary; I disagree, and believe that the declaration of rights is inseparable from that of duties." (*Moniteur*, 1789, no. 33)

87 M. Camus, jurist, deputy of Paris to the Estates General, was a stubborn Jansenist, but also a man of fearlessness and unequaled probity. He was perhaps the most honest politician of the Revolution. (*Diction. de Dezobry.*)

88 *Moniteur*, no. 33. — *Hist. parlent. de la Révol.*, t. II. p. 221-222.

among these populations the Christian faith is in no way protected by governments; and not only is it not protected, but it is beaten down and taken away from the populations by most governments.

This surpasses all imaginable ineptitude and treachery!

The Trojans didn't surrender themselves, nor did they throw down their weapons at the Greeks who, from the flanks of the sinister horse and the open gates, poured in from all sides. They certainly didn't throw down their weapons. And to the people of France, governments are taking away weapons, the weapon par excellence: faith; they are handing them over unarmed!

When Troy was on fire, the unfortunate but valiant Hector, appearing to Aeneas, was able to say to him: *If Troy could be defended by the arm of a mortal, this arm would have defended it*!... Few governments since 1789 have had the right to repeat this proud justification in the face of the threatening hordes of socialism or the invading tribes of Judaism: for their arm, instead of guaranteeing the people, has torn away the shield of faith! The proof is overwhelming:

Already, the Declaration of the Rights of Man was, by *eliminating the name of Christ*, impious, fatal, dangerous;

Already, the rejection of the statement of *duties* alongside the statement of rights made it even more dangerous;

But the fact that these two imprudences were joined by the enterprise, planned and calculated on the part of some, permitted and accepted by others, of taking the Christian faith away from the populations into whose midst this monster of a war machine was being introduced — ah! this was the most detestable betrayal as well as the most incredible ineptitude. The Hebrews will soon be the masters of these disarmed populations. If ever faith had been necessary to the people, was it not at the very moment when the Jews would find themselves mixed up with them, spying on their morals and beliefs, ready to take advantage of the slightest lapses, and even provoking them! If ever faith should have been not only protected, but corroborated and enhanced by governments, was it not at the very moment when they gave the French Jews as fellow citizens? For was it not, above all, through faith that the Nations became superior to the Jews? If we confine ourselves to the simple

forces of nature, they are inferior to them in several essential respects: they lack their vitality, their skill, their finesse, their tenacity, their understanding and their durability. So now was the time, or never, to tan their ancient Christian faith: that faith which, divinely added to their natural qualities, had caused them to produce, in every sphere of human activity, prodigies and marvels of which the Jews themselves had been astonished and jealous. But, on the other hand, to withdraw this faith from them, the worker of great things, at a time when the Jews were about to become their emulators in civil life, was not to prepare them to become their inferiors, and to come under their yoke? Well, it's to this latter party that so many governments have rallied! Jesus Christ has already been struck out of the new French Constitution: in 93, crosses will soon be broken, churches closed and priests' throats slit; in the years to come, governments will continue, in one form or another and step by step, to undermine the Church, to make it disappear; and it is under such conditions that the Jews are told: Come in, all civil rights belong to you! Ineptitude, treason! We'll complain that they're the masters, that they are; we've done everything to make them so! At the same time as they were being introduced into the bosom of generous France, the faith, the shield of her bosom, was being torn from her!

V

The episode of the snakes that embrace Laocoön when the horse is introduced into the walls of Troy is also repeated when the Declaration of the Rights of Man becomes a war machine.

A final trait completes the resemblance between the sack of Troy and that which threatens French society. Virgil also drew this last resemblance with a masterly hand. We have not mentioned it in the poet's verses quoted above, holding it in reserve for a particular relief, more striking by that very fact. This is the episode of the snakes embracing Laocoön and his sons.

Laocoön, priest of Neptune, had been the only one to suspect the Greeks' trap and blame the Trojans' imprudence. He even threw a javelin into the monster's side. The sting fixed itself with a shudder, and the deep cavities gave a muffled groan. Suddenly, a terrible sight struck the eyes of the unfortunate Trojans and threw their hearts into unexpected turmoil.

Let Virgil speak:[89]

89 Ecce autem gemini a Tenedo tranquilla per alta
(Horresco referens) immensis orbibus angues
Incumbunt pelago pariterque ad litora tendunt;
Pectora quorum inter fluctus arrecta jubaeque
Sanguineae superant undas; pars cetera pontum
Pone legit sinuatque immensa volumine terga.
Fit sonitus spumante salo; iamque arva tenebant,
Ardentisque oculos suffecti sanguine et igni,
Sibila lambebant linguis vibrantibus ora.
Diffugimus visu exsangues. illi agmine certo
Laocoonta petunt; et primum parva duorum
Corpora natorum serpens amplexus uterque
Implicat et miseros morsu depascitur artus;
Post ipsum, auxilio subeuntem ac tela ferentem
Corripiunt spirisque ligant ingentibus: et jam
Bis medium amplexi, bis collo squamea circum
Terga dati, superant capite et cervicibus altis.
Ille simul manibus tendit divellere nodos,

Behold, two serpents from Tênédos (I shudder at this account) cross the calm waves, stretch out their immense rings over the sea and head headlong for the shore.

Their chests rise amid the waves and their bloody crests dominate the sea, while the rest of their bodies drag themselves along, skimming the liquid plain, and their rumps fold into a huge spiral. The bitter wave foamed and resounded.

Already, they were touching the ground, and with their lips red with blood and fire, they darted their tongues and licked their mouths, hissing. We fled at the sight, our hearts frozen with fear.

They, without hesitation, went straight for Laocoön; and first, both snakes, embracing the weak bodies of his two sons, entwined their victims and tore off their miserable limbs. Then, as Laocoön flew to their aid, weapons in hand, they seized him too and embraced him with their long folds; twice already, they had embraced his body from the middle, and twice rolled their scaly rump around his neck; they still overtook him with their head and high neck.

He, covered in their slobber and black venom, which stains his bandages, tries with his hands to tear himself away from their embrace, and at the same time utters dreadful cries to the heavens; like a bull roaring, which, wounded in the neck, has fled from the altar, and shaken the insecure axe.

To Virgil's poignant tale, ancient sculpture has added an even more poignant representation, under the chisel of Phidias' emulators. The famous marble group in Rome depicts the long agony of Laocoön with her children. Anyone who has seen it makes an indelible impression. The agony of a father struggling with his sons against the folds of snakes is unforgettable. O that upright, suffering head of Laocoön, I can still see it! And then that desperate arm holding aloft while the other falls back, stopped in their efforts by the reptiles' formidable rings: it's vivid, it's poignant, you want to fly to their rescue!

Looking at this pathetic marble, I said to myself: this is the situation of poor modern society;

Perfusus sanie vittas atroque veneno;
Clamores simul horrendos ad sidera tollit,
Qualis mugitus, fugit cum saucius aram.
Taurus et incertam excussit cervice securim.

While the *Declaration of the Rights of Man*, like the lair of the Greeks, is about to produce terrible surprises, hideous masonry, whose folds are all too reminiscent of the snakes of Laocoön, is about to embrace French society. All that is father, all that is linked to that glorious role of paternity of which God himself is the principle, will be included in its embraces. There is the fatherhood of the king for his people. There is the fatherhood of the priest for souls. There is the fatherhood of the head of the family for his children. This triple paternity will gradually be embraced and slowly suffocated by the hideous, creeping masonry. The Christian monarchy will succumb, the Christian religion will die, the Christian family will crack like bones under formidable rings. Seized in the immense folds and embraces of the Masonic sect, French society will struggle in despair!

And while Masonry paralyzes all life and movement, the Jews, free and invading, will take control of the highest positions.

CHAPTER IV
THE CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH THE JEWISH QUESTION WAS PUT BEFORE THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (AUGUST TO DECEMBER 1789)

I

FROM THE CONSIDERATIONS PRESENTED TO THE READER IN THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER, WE MOVE ON TO THE DETAILS OF THE FACTS.

If the reader has been careful, the two preceding chapters, combined like two torches, have shed an accusing light on the *Declaration of the Rights of Man*, examining it from a point of view that had hitherto remained in the shadows.

In the days of Isaiah, the people of Seir came to question the Seer, the prophet, and said to him, "*Watchman, what do you see in the night of events; watchman, tell us what you see?*"[90] We too, questioning, without any bias, the Spirit of justice and truth who never ceases to hover, even in the darkest days, over the society he preserves and directs, asked him: Incorruptible watchman, what do you see in this preamble to the Revolution that so many people have mistaken for a dawn and which seems to us to conceal darkness and dangers; watchman, tell us what you see? And the Spirit of justice and truth gave us this answer:

We see in this preamble: Christ, who is eliminated from the French Constitution, and the Jews, who are confined to it as if in a war machine...

These general considerations were indispensable - was it not necessary to denounce the Hebraic color that hides among the chameleon-like colors enjoyed by the 1789 *Declaration of Rights*?

A state of affairs in which impoverishment, outlawry and constant

90 The small tribe of Seir, located in Idumea, had come to ask the prophet Isaiah about the events. — Isaiah, 21:11-12.

alarm are going to pass over to the Christians, and, on the contrary, the accumulation of wealth, the favors of power and security to the Jews, is no longer a normal state of affairs. It shows not just a shift in influences, but a reversal of the old religious and social data. The Seer quoted above went on to say: *As a hungry man dreams that he eats during the night, but when he is awake, he finds himself empty; and as one who is thirsty dreams that he drinks, and after his sleep has passed, he rises again tired and thirsty, and is empty; so shall the whole multitude of these Nations be found...*[91] And, indeed, since they rejected obedience to Christ to govern themselves according to the rights of man, the unfortunate Nations dream, every night, that they eat, and they wake up hungry; that they drink, and they wake up tired and impaired; emptiness, an ever more frightening emptiness, has answered their Declaration of Rights!

Only the children of Jacob do not complain, because abundance comes to them!

That alone would be enough to judge a work that has reversed the order of things, and delivered the sources of life...

From these general considerations, we now turn to the details of the facts. Under what circumstances was the Jewish question brought before the National Assembly? Who were its supporters and opponents? What were its vicissitudes? What means did the Hebrews use to bring it to a successful conclusion, and wrest from the Assembly the decree of complete emancipation? These are the little-known, truncated or mutilated facts that we are going to re-establish and bring to light, backed up by unassailable documents. It's a thrilling piece of history.

91 Isaiah 29:8

II

OPENING OF THE ESTATES GENERAL: A JEWISH DEPUTATION FROM ALSACE, LORRAINE AND THE TROIS-EVÊCHÊS, PETITIONING THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. A FIRST BUT UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT TO BRING THE JEWISH QUESTION BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY AT THE MOST LABORIOUS AND CRITICAL MOMENT OF 1789. CURÉ GRÉGOIRE LEADS THE CHARGE.

The initiative for the agreement that was to be established between the Jews and the Revolution belongs to the parish priest of Emberménil: it was he who united them. A prizewinner, as we have seen, in the Metz competition, he had found a vein in the question of the Jews. Flattered by their praise and trust, he wanted to make their emancipation his business. Shortly before the opening of the Estates General, he had written to one of the most influential of them, Isaiah *Bing* of Metz, in these terms:

Emberménil, February 23, 1789.

"*Read to me, my dear Bing, on the eve of the Estates-General, shouldn't you consult with other members of your nation, to demand the rights and benefits of citizens? more than ever, here is the moment...*

"*Always love your* inviolable *friend.*

GRÉGOIRE.
parish priest of Emberménil.[92]

His advice was heeded, and by the spring of 1789, six Jews were on their way to Paris.

The Estates General having been convened by Louis XVI, deputies were appointed from all over France, divided into seneschalties and bailiwicks, and cahiers were delivered to the deputies. These booklets contained the grievances and wishes of the people; the country expressed itself freely on the reforms it thought useful. The Jews of Alsace, Lorraine and the Trois-Evèchés, who did not enjoy the

92 *Archives Israélites*, year 1844, p. 416.

rights of citizens, were unable to take part in this great movement of national revolt. Nevertheless, in May 1789, "their letters from the Keeper of the Seals, delivered by the intendants, had authorized the Jews to assemble before their syndics, in the usual manner, to each appoint two deputies in their respective provinces, and to bring the notebooks of their grievances, which were to be melted into one during their meeting in the capital, and then given to the Keeper of the Seals, to refer to the king."[93] This was done, and the six Jews, on their way to the capital, were these deputies.[94]

They arrived in Paris, then Versailles, where the Assembly was sitting. They found a rather singular center: the home of parish priest Grégoire, deputy for Lorraine, who became their man. It was to him, moreover, that the Garde des Sceaux returned the Jewish cahiers, for use at the National Assembly.[95] Together, protégé and protector followed the sessions held at Versailles. The sons of Israel, as interested and skillful people, did not lose sight of a single one of the Assembly's movements, and the naïve and liberal Grégoire, flattered to have the Old Testament under his wings, gave himself the air of Moses seeking a ford to introduce his clients into the land of liberty!

The first attempt was unsuccessful. It was attempted on Monday August 3RD. The Assembly was in a state of overexcitement that was easy to understand. Letters from the provinces had just brought news that property was falling prey to the most culpable brigandage, castles were being burned, convents destroyed and farms abandoned to pillage. In the preceding session (Saturday August 1st), the discussion on the Constitution had begun feverishly, with the question: *Will we or will we not put a Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen at the head of the Constitution?* Fifty-six speakers had registered. Finally, in the session that was to follow (Tuesday August 4TH), this superb

93 *Motion en faveur des juifs*, by Grégoire, p. 5.

94 The Alsace deputies were: D. Sintzheim and S. Seligman Wittersheim; Lorraine deputies: Mayer-Marx and Berr-Isaac-Berr; Metz and Trois-Evêchés deputies: Goudchaux, Mayer Cahn and Louis Wolf.

95 "The current Keeper of the Seals returned the documents to me for use in the National Assembly." *Motion*, etc., p. 5.

explosion of voluntary self-denial was to take place, with the clergy and nobility vying with each other in selfless abandonment of their privileges. The time was ripe for excitement. It was, however, this hour that our Grégoire chose. Between the session that inaugurated the great discussion of human rights, and the one that saw the nobility and clergy enthusiastically embracing voluntary self-denial, he came to ask: the Jews! He appears at the podium, anonymous letters in hand. He wants to read them. A resounding "no" from the audience. But Grégoire is stubborn; it's not for nothing that he's rubbed shoulders with Old Testament people; he insists. The entire Assembly, undoubtedly judging the communication with which he assailed it to be indiscreet and inappropriate, shouted loudly: *Fire, fire, anonymous letters!* So well received in the morning, Grégoire reappeared in the gallery that same evening, and, in addition to the looting of convents, castles and farms, he interjected the looting of Jews in Alsace. He exclaimed: "*Minister of a religion which regards all men as brothers, I claim in this circumstance the intervention of the power of the Assembly in favor of this proscribed and unhappy people.*"[96] He would have liked to secure a favorable vote, and, since the discussion of human rights was beginning, to direct its first application to his protégés.

The Assembly remained cold.

A few hours later, as we said, the legendary session of the night of August 4th was held. What a subject for reflection these two consecutive sessions were: the Jews coming forward to try to take possession of human rights, and the French nobility, along with the clergy, dispossessing themselves, perhaps too quickly, of their feudal rights and ancient privileges. M. Thiers portrayed this transport thus:

"Royalty had eagerly sacrificed all its prerogatives; but we were faced with the mass of the privileged, and everyone had their privileges: the nobility, the clergy, the Third Estate, the provinces, the towns; and, faced with such a mass of adversaries, we felt the kind of anxiety that an army feels when the first cannon shot of a great battle is about to sound.

96 *Moniteur*, 1789, n°33. — *Histoire parlementaire de la Révolution*, t. II, p. 209, 212.

"Suddenly, the French nobility, heroic on this occasion as they were at Fontenoy, when they galloped towards the English lines, so as not to leave the infantry the honor of braving these formidable lines alone, the French nobility rushed to the tribune, and was the first to sacrifice its privileges: all its members came forward without exception. The clergy, seized with the same enthusiasm, imitated their example, and came to sacrifice their privileges, tithes and benefices. The Third Estate, in turn, followed with the same enthusiasm; and, when everything had been sacrificed, they still searched their memories to see if there might not be some forgotten privilege that could be placed on the altar which, on that day, was indeed the altar of the fatherland."[97]

And so, Frenchmen and Jews, some stripped, others presented themselves to acquire: it wasn't quite the same thing!

Grégoire didn't succeed. But, with his characteristic tenacity and, what's more, with the support and impetus of his clients, he was ready to try again: hadn't Moses struck the rock twice? The adoption of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, after months of debate, took place towards the end of August. The parish priest of Emberménil wasted no time; the very next day, he prepared a motion in favor of his protégés; it began as follows: "Messieurs les députés, you have enshrined the rights of man and citizen, allow a Catholic priest to raise his voice in favor of fifty thousand Jews scattered across the kingdom, who, being men, *claim the rights of citizens*."[98] The peroration was no less urgent: "As arbiters of their fate, will you, Messieurs, confine yourselves to sterile compassion? By you, the generous representatives of a people whose freedom you cemented by abolishing feudal slavery. You have proclaimed the king the *Restorer of Liberty*; he would be humiliated to reign over men who would not enjoy it: fifty thousand Frenchmen have risen up as slaves, it depends on you that they go to bed free!"[99] As we can see, Gregory was quick to

97 Speech on political freedoms, delivered by M. Thiers at the *Corps législatif*, in the meeting of March 28, 1865.

98 *Motion*, etc., p. i.

99 *Ibid*., p. 45.

the mark: Jews are men, so they must be citizens. And then, what a ruse in that last sentence: "Fifty thousand Frenchmen have risen up as slaves; it depends on you that they go to bed free." But no, Monsieur le curé, it's not fifty thousand *Frenchmen*, it's fifty thousand *Jews* who rise and lie down: you're assuming the conclusion!

The National Assembly did not feel it necessary to hear the reading of the motion. So Grégoire let it be printed and addressed it to the public. "May my motion, which could not be pronounced at the National Assembly, dispose the public in favor of the Jews. When their case is discussed, I will redouble my efforts.[100] Doesn't the comings and goings of this singular shepherd to obtain civil rights for the Jews remind us of the famous fable: *The Coach and the Fly?*

> On an uphill path, sandy, uneasy
> And on all sides exposed to the sun,
> Six strong horses pulled a coach.
> Women, monks, old men, all had dismounted.
> The carriage was sweating, puffing, lathered.
> A fly appears, and approaches the horses,
> Pretends to animate them by its buzzing,
> Stings one, stings the other; and thinks at all times
> That she makes the machine go[101]
> Sits on the tiller, on the coachman's nose;
> Come, come, go quickly...
> After a lot of work, the coach reaches the top.

In this exquisite and fine description by the good La Fontaine, there is, alas! the whole story of the efforts of the National Assembly around the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen.

Let's take a look: this uphill, sandy, uneasy path, as it well expresses the new Constitution, steep and abrupt in its philosophism, that we've been climbing ever since the Estates General convened;

Alongside this Constitution, we can see the Declaration of Rights

100 Page 15 of the *Notice historique* preceding the *Motion*.

101 There's that word *machine* again, appearing here without our having looked for it. War machine like the Trojan horse, heavy machine like La Fontaine's coach, oh disastrous Declaration of Rights, may we succeed in ridiculing you and making you hated!

rising painfully, a real coach, so heavy and ungracious is it!

There's a bizarre assemblage in the hall and galleries of this National Assembly, as around the coach: women, monks, old men!

The carriage was sweating, puffing, rendered; and so was the Assembly! Read the minutes of the sessions devoted to the painful progress of the Declaration from May to the end of August, and you'll see how much the Assembly sweated...

And the fly appears... Is it Grégoire, priest of Emberménil? Or is it the Jewish question? For if Grégoire is in a hurry, the Jewish question is in a hurry to succeed. What's certain is that such a fly in the National Assembly, in the year 1789, was not completely harmless!

After a great deal of hard work, the bell arrived at the top: the Declaration! And Grégoire was delighted for his Judean flock.

III

IMPATIENCE, AMONG A CERTAIN NUMBER OF JEWS, TO BE RECOGNIZED AS CITIZENS. REASONS FOR THIS IMPATIENCE: 1) THE MOUNTING ANGER IN ALSACE; 2) THE VOLUME OF BILE AMONG JEWS NO LESS THAN AMONG COMMONERS AND VILLAINS.

The sons of Israel who gravitate around Gregory are of several kinds. First, there are the six Jews who have officially come from Alsace, Lorraine, Metz and the Trois-Évêchés. Behind these envoys, most of the Jews of these provinces are waiting and making vows. Then there's the famous Cerfberr, who is fighting and on trial with the city of Strasbourg: this one is a real power, thanks to its gold, its credit and its relations with the great and the philosophers. Last but not least, there were the Jews of Paris, still few in number at the time; there were scarcely 500 of them in the capital, but their ideas were very advanced. These various clans of Hebrews were unanimous in pressing the issue and hastening the outcome. Jews in neighboring countries, let alone those in other parts of the world, are completely unaware of the attempt being made on their behalf, namely the civil rights being sought for them; they are asleep, slumbering as they have been for centuries around the sepulchre of their freedom. But there's no doubt that they'll join in, as soon as the great jolt awakens them; for we'll find a way to prove to them that the ancient wonders of Israel's entry into the Promised Land will be renewed for them, when the emissaries, sent to explore it, returned with fruits of extraordinary size, and a bunch of grapes carried by two men on their shoulders.[102] This prospect of big profits will inflame their descendants, the leaders have no doubt about it!

What was it, then, that determined the Jews of Alsace, of Paris, and above all personalities like Cerfberr, to put the Declaration of Rights to immediate use, to waste no time, to the point that the last article of the Declaration was voted on August 26, and that, on that same August 26, the Jews residing in Paris presented an address

102 Numbers 13:24–28.

to the National Assembly to obtain civil rights; what was it, then, that excited them to make haste in this way?

Two things: the storm brewing in Alsace against the region's Jews, and the impatience of hearts embittered by outrage and misfortune. Let's explain this haste:

In Alsace, the position of Jewish families was no longer tenable. We have recounted elsewhere the unheard-of episode of the forged receipts: How the peasants of Alsace's Sundgau region had been lured by blasters into forging false receipts to pay off their debts to usurious Jews; and how Louis XVI's government, justly ashamed of such an act by Christians, and no less justly alarmed by the usurious and oppressive behavior of the Jews, rushed to intervene, either to repair the injustice of some, or to curb the usury of others.[103] The case was referred to the Sovereign Council of Colmar. A major trial was held. After verification, the claims of the Jews on the Christians amounted to 10,757,161 francs, from which had to be deducted the bad debts, the lapsed claims and their passive debts. On August 28, 1787, the Colmar court had handed down a ruling setting out the terms and conditions under which Jewish creditors of Christians could demand partial repayment of their claims, the titles of which had been recognized by the courts. It was thought, therefore, that this lamentable affair was over. But it was not. The fabrication of false receipts continued. But what was more serious, in August 1789, at the very time when castles were being burned and farms looted in various parts of France, Alsace had been the scene of scenes of delirium and frenzy. In more than twenty villages, the peasants had pounced on the Jews: "Their houses were ransacked; their money and belongings looted; they fled half-naked, taking refuge by the hundreds in Basel, where they were received and treated charitably. The clerks' offices were broken into, in order to destroy all their claims against the Christians."[104]

"The expelled Jews returned to their homes before the end of September, where they are camped rather than housed. They must

103 See *l'Entrée des Israélites dans la Société française*, Book II Chap. II.

104 *Rapport lu à l'assemblée de la Société des amis de la Constitution à Strasbourg*, February 27, 1790, on the question of Jewish civil status, p. 9.

thank God for this winter's mild weather, without which many of them would have died of cold, having found neither doors, nor windows, nor stoves in their homes. Everywhere, the Christians have welcomed them fairly well; they seem ashamed of the violence they have committed."[105] In one village, Uffholtz, however, the Jews had continued to suffer such abuse that it had become necessary to call in the protection of bayonets for their safety: a detachment of troops was permanently stationed there.[106] That was the situation. But with their practical sense, our Hebrews soon realized that no protection would be worth that of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, which was being drafted by the National Assembly, and that if they were recognized as citizens, they would be covered in a more effective and lasting way. That's why the good Curé Grégoire, in agreement with them, was pressing for the completion of the tutelary legislation with his fly's sting or his shepherd's crook; and that's why, too, the last article of the Declaration of Rights had not yet been voted on when our Jews, impatient to be protected, were already demanding its first application for themselves.

Their impatience was further fueled by another cause: they were tired of being the whipping boys; their gall bladders had burst.

In peoples, as in individuals, there is a gall bladder that fills up, and when it ruptures, the result is storms of the heart: these are the most terrible! Of all the causes that led to the French Revolution, this was perhaps the most real. It wasn't the taxes, nor the abuses of authority, nor the vexations of the intendants, nor the ruinous delays of justice that had most irritated the nation, but rather the contempt in which the commoners had been held by the great. So, when the ideas of reform and equality were put into circulation by Rousseau's books, the little people threw themselves into them with more avidity than anyone else.[107] In his study on *l'Ancien Régime*, M.

105 *Rapport lu*, etc., p. 10.

106 *Ibid*., p. 11, 12.

107 At the beginning of the reign of Louis XVI, a traveler returning home after a few years' absence, when asked what change he noticed in the nation, replied: "*Nothing else, except that what is said in the salons is repeated in the streets.*" And what is repeated in the streets is Rousseau's doctrine, the *Discours sur l'inégalitè*, the Social Contract amplified, popularized and repeated

Taine has strongly presented this irritation of the middle and lower classes, and supported it with anecdotes that will help us understand what we have to say about the storms of the heart among the Jews:

"At the Grenoble theater, Barnave as a child was with his mother in a box that the Duc de Tonnerre, governor of the province, had intended for one of his supporters. The theater director, then the officer on guard, came to ask Madame Barnave to withdraw: she refused; by order of the governor, four riflemen arrived to force her to do so. The audience was already taking sides, and violence was feared, when M. Barnave, aware of the affront, came to take his wife away and said loudly: "*I'm leaving by order of the governor.*" ("I'm leaving by order of the governor"). The public, the entire indignant bourgeoisie, promised not to return to the show until they were satisfied, and indeed, the theater remained empty for several months, until Madame Barnave consented to reappear. The future deputy later remembered the outrage, and from then on vowed "to raise the caste to which he belonged from the humiliation to which it seemed condemned.

Similarly, Lacroix, the future member of the National Convention, was pushed out of the theater by a gentleman giving his arm to a pretty woman, and complained aloud: "*Who are you?*" — He, still a provincial, has the good-naturedness to parade his first and last names and qualities throughout. — "*Well,*" says the other, *"it's very well done to you for being all that; as for me, I'm the Count de Chabannes, and I'm in a great hurry.*" With that, "laughing inordinately," he climbed back into the carriage. "*Ah, Monsieur,*" said Lacroix, still hot from his misadventure, "*the awful distance that pride and prejudice put between men!*"

"You can be sure that in Marat, a surgeon in the stables of the Count of Artois, in Robespierre, a protégé of the Bishop of Arras, in Danton, a small-time lawyer in Mery-sur-Seine, in all the others, in twenty encounters, self-esteem had bled likewise. Thanks to Rousseau, vanity, so natural in man, so sensitive in a Frenchman, became more sensitive. The slightest nuance, a tone of voice, seemed a mark of disdain. One day, while speaking before the Minister of War, about

by his disciples in all tones and forms.

a general officer who had reached that rank through merit: "*Ah, yes,*" said the Minister, "*a general officer of fortune!*" This word was repeated, commented on, and did a lot of harm.

"At the Duc de Penthièvre, the nobles ate with the master of the house, the commoners dined with his first gentleman and only came to the salon for coffee. There, they find the others who have had the honor of dining with His Highness "in force and with a high tone", and who do not fail to greet the newcomers with a protective complacency. That's enough; no matter how hard the duke tries, Beugnot, so pliant, has no desire to return. We hold a grudge against them, not only for the too-short saints they make, but also for the too-large reverences we make for them.

"When the heart is revolted, it resents everything. Following Rousseau's example, the Third Estate resents the nobles for everything they do, and even more for everything they are, for their luxury, their elegance, their banter, their fine and brilliant manners. Their coldness as well as their familiarity, their attentions as well as their inattentiveness are offenses, and, under these millions of pinpricks, real or imaginary, the bladder of bile fills up.

"In 1789, it's full and it's going to burst."[108]

Well, a similar moral phenomenon is occurring among the Jewish people, at the very moment when the commoner classes of France are setting them an example. After nearly two thousand years of suffering, is it any wonder that, when announcements of liberty and equality penetrate even to the Jews, their suffering pride rises again, and their old blood, which quivered at Sinai and animated the Maccabees, sets to bubbling again? In him too, the bile pocket has filled, and is breaking.

They are weary of the contemptuous terms that the laws authorize against them in proceedings. The cahiers of the Alsatian Jews, submitted to the parish priest of Emberménil by the keeper of the seals, contain this complaint and this request: "That all public figures be forbidden to use disparaging epithets against Jews in pleadings, deeds, service of documents", and so on.[109]

108 TAINE, *l'Ancien Régime*, p. 417-20

109 GRÉGOIRE, *Motion en faveur des juifs*, historical notice, p. 6-7.

They are tired of being a source of wealth for the lords. "These unfortunate people cannot settle anywhere without the permission of the lord, who sells it at whatever price he wants. They pay him an annual protection fee. And the young Jew, when he marries, is still obliged to pay the tax that the lord imposes on him, to have permission to *settle in the village where he was born!*"[110]

Cerfberr, so enduring, is weary of the interminable opposition of the Strasbourg magistrates to the right conferred on him by Louis XVI, as a reward for his services, to reside in Strasbourg as a free man.[111] His last supplication to His Majesty reveals a deep irritation: "Thus, the magistrates of Strasbourg refuse Your Majesty the right to reward the suppliant in the place where he has had the honor of serving Your Majesty. What! the royal authority, which has so much power to punish crime, has none to reward service! Isn't it strange to see a Jew stipulating the interests of the State! And why not? since the government has stipulated these interests with him!..."[112]

The Jews of Strasbourg are tired of being turned away and dismissed from the city every evening at the sound of the horn, and of being forced to sleep in the surrounding villages.[113] This horn, whose sound means: *Out, Jews!* gets on their nerves. What an outpouring of gall in these lines: "We hope that the new municipality of Strasbourg will no longer allow a daily opportunity to frighten children, to tell them impertinent fables, to sow in their hearts the seeds of hatred, which develop through education, take root and become indestructible : I'm talking about that odious horn, the mournful sound of which is heard every evening at the start of the night, from the top of the cathedral, and strikes terror into the souls of all those whose ears are not accustomed to it. The prejudices with which the people of Strasbourg are imbued, their blind hatred of the Jews, owe their origin in large part to the impression made on children by the sound of this horn, and to the ridiculous stories told to them, the tradition

110 *Rapport lu à Strasbourg à l'assemblée de la Société des amis de la Constitution* (1790), p. 4.

111 See *l'Entrée des Israélites*, etc., Part I, Chap. VII.

112 *Archives nationales*, O^1 610, p. 18.

113 See *l'Entrée des Israélites*, etc., Part I, Chap. VI.

of which is religiously preserved."[114]

And so, what long-contained storms of the heart, about those terms of contempt used in the proceedings, those heavy taxes to be paid to the lords, those shameful tolls, those daily evictions, that odious horn! Long contained, they erupt, along with similar storms in the hearts of commoners, on the date of 1789: and this explains why, as soon as the discussion on the rights of man seems to be drawing to a close, our Jews are already there, at the door of the Assembly, in Gregoire's ear, whispering: Hurry, hurry the denouement!

114 *Rapport lu à Strasbourg*, etc., p. 26-7.

IV

New plan: the Jews of Paris take the initiative. Relying on the Declaration of the Rights of Man, they demanded the title of citizens, as irreproachable men; and the Jews of Alsace, to obtain it as well, promised Alsatians to resemble the Jews of Paris. This plan did not succeed.

To succeed, what plan of operation was adopted? The following; - not that we've found it spelled out in any document, but it's clear from the documents we're about to read:

First line of operation. - As the Jews of Alsace are very poorly regarded by public opinion, due to their multiplied usury, which has led to the ruin of so many unfortunate farmers, it is the *Jews of Paris* who have drafted, and are presenting to the National Assembly, the request by which they ask to be admitted to the number of citizens.

The reasoning behind their request is very simple: they are men, they are, by their conduct, irreproachable, worthy of another fate: therefore they must be citizens.

Wouldn't the confident tone in which their address to the deputies is written suggest that they were aware of the starting point and end point of this famous Declaration of Rights? Let us judge: "Without doubt, and we like to think so, your justice did not ask to be solicited, nor prevented by our wishes. In restoring man to his original dignity, in re-establishing him in the enjoyment of his rights, you did not intend to make any distinction between one man and another; this title belongs to us as it does to all other members of society; the rights deriving from it therefore belong to us equally. This is the reassuring consequence of the fundamental principles you have just established. We are therefore *certain* that our existence will be different from the one to which we have been devoted until now. The title of man guarantees us that of citizen; and the title of citizen will give us all the rights of the city, all the civil faculties, which we see enjoyed, alongside us, by the members of a society of which we

are a part."[115] Doesn't such assurance of language presuppose prior, in-depth knowledge of what was being prepared? Would men on the sidelines of society, had they not been aware (behind the scenes) of the drafting, purpose and scope of the Bill of Rights, have presented such confident conclusions on August 26, the very evening the Bill was voted on? Isn't ignorance accompanied by more timidity and reserve, especially in the first steps?

The Jews of Paris, in demanding to be admitted as citizens, based on the one hand on human rights, and on the other hand on "their submission to the laws of which they had given such a constant example, their ardent love for the monarch, their peaceful character",[116] in a word on their irreproachable conduct, had no doubt forgotten the recriminations and reproaches of which they had been the object under the previous reign. A petition from the six bodies of Paris merchants, addressed to His Majesty King Louis XV, argued that admitting Jews would be directly contrary to His Majesty's desire to make commerce increasingly flourish, and included the following words: "Not only are they incapable of bringing it the slightest advantage, but they can only desolate and ruin it... The admission of this kind of man into a political society can only be very dangerous. They can be compared to wasps, which enter hives only to kill the bees, open their bellies and extract the honey... To allow a single Jew to trade in a city is to allow everyone to do so, and to oppose each trader with the forces of an entire nation: they are particles of quicksilver that run, that stray, and that at the slightest incline are reunited into a main block."[117] The Jews of Paris, drunk on the Revolution that had begun humanity anew, no doubt forgot this past. So true is it that the desire to appear transformed often produces, in the sinner who makes amends, the illusion that his transformation has already been achieved!

115 *Adresse présentée à l'Assemblée nationale le 26 août 1789, par les juifs résidant à Paris,* p. 2-3. — It is signed by J. Goldschmidt, Chairman; Abraham Lopés Lagouna, Vice Chairman; Weil, Benjamin. Fernandès, Mardochée Lévi, etc.

116 Expressions contained in the Address, p. 4.

117 *Archives nationales*, ADI[B] xxvii, no. 26, Paris merchants' petition against the admission of Jews, pages 19, 245, 28.

So here's the first line of operation: among the Jews, it's those in Paris who submit an address to the National Assembly asking to be recognized as citizens.

Second line of operation: the Jews of Alsace promise the Alsatians that they will resemble their co-religionists in Paris.

Indeed, while their co-religionists were working to succeed with the National Assembly, the Jews of Alsace were trying to soften and conciliate the Alsatian people. As a counterpart to the former's Address to the National Assembly, an *Address from Alsatian Jews to the people of Alsace* appeared. Strasbourg, Colmar and especially the Sundgau must have rubbed their eyes when they read the following:

a) Beginning:

"Citizens, we expect the National Assembly to issue a decree favorable to our hopes; but before doing so, we wish to reassure you about the worries and fears it may arouse in your minds. Please do not think that we will ever abuse it. If you were to judge what we will one day be by what we have been up to now, your error would be great, and you are too wise to adopt it. Be persuaded, on the contrary, that men are, in general, only what we want them to be, and that we have been forced to have the defects and faults that some of us are reproached for."[118]

b) Promise to be like the Jews of Paris:

"The capital of the kingdom, at this time, is making a solemn approach to the National Assembly, to bear authentic witness in favor of the Jews established within its walls, and to express at the same time the desire that all those of the State participate in the same benefit... Once again, do not despair of seeing a salutary revolution take place in our customs, when the example of the Jews of Paris, *to whom no reproach is made*, is a sure guarantee of the truth of the promises we dare to make to you."[119]

c) But they don't let go of their claims:

"Citizens! when we have obtained from the National Assembly the decree we await from its wisdom, deign to applaud it.

"We have claims on you; these claims are considerable, but very

118 *Adresse des juifs alsaciens au peuple d'Alsace*, p. 1-2.

119 *Adresse des juifs alsaciens au peuple d'Alsace*, p. 4.

distant terms have been granted to you by a decree of the Sovereign Council of Colmar, dated 1787, to liquidate your claims against us.

"Would it be because of these debts that you could see with displeasure our admission to the title of citizens? Would you be less in debt? And would the time for payment come later, if we did not obtain the act of justice that the National Assembly *cannot refuse us?*[120]

It must be admitted that for people who had seen the roofs of their houses ripped off, and who had been hounded, as we said, in more than twenty villages, it was not a little impudent and foolhardy to speak in this way to the Alsatians. So the combined plan of the Hebrews of Paris and the Hebrews of Alsace hardly succeeded. The National Assembly did not seem to notice, let alone be moved by, the address of the former; and Alsace, on reading the address of the latter, only became more exasperated. As for the six Jewish deputies who had come to Versailles and surrounded Grégoire, they had continued to languish for several months on the threshold of the Assembly, without having been able to enter its precincts once.[121]

120 *Ibid*., p. 5-6.

121 *Motion en faveur des juifs*, by GRÉGOIRE, historical notice, p. 12.

V

After languishing for several months, the Jewish deputation was brought before the Assembly to present its request, on August 14 (penultimate session of the Assembly at Versailles). It was agreed that the Jewish affair would be examined during the session.

Grégoire, however, had not entirely lost his nerve. Since the horrible day of October 6 at Versailles,[122] the Assembly has been humiliated, dismayed and discouraged: one hundred and twenty members have deserted its benches. It was against this backdrop, and at the penultimate session held in Versailles, that Grégoire succeeded in getting the Jewish deputation from Lorraine, Alsace and the Trois-Evèchés to present its petition. This took place on October 14. At the evening session, the six Jews who made up the deputation were admitted to the bar of the Assembly. More astute than their co-religionists from Paris and Alsace, whose addresses had been hurt by their haughty claims, they came forward with a petition whose wording left nothing to be desired. Their president, Berr-Isaac-Berr, spoke as follows:

My Lords,

"It is in the name of the Eternal, author of all justice and truth, in the name of this God who, in giving everyone the same rights, has prescribed the same duties for all; it is in the name of humanity, outraged for so many centuries by the ignominious treatment to which the unfortunate descendants of the most ancient of all peoples have been subjected in almost every corner of the earth, that we come today to beseech you to kindly take into consideration their deplorable destiny.

"Persecuted everywhere, debased everywhere, yet always submissive, never rebellious, the object of indignation and contempt among

122 A vile mob had made its way from Paris to Versailles. The Assembly, in session, had been insulted, then defiled by people who spent the night there. At dawn, the château had been invaded, the apartments where the queen slept besieged by a ferocious mob, two bodyguards killed, and their heads placed at the head of the foul procession that took the king and queen from Versailles to Paris.

all peoples, when they should only have been the object of tolerance and pity, the Jews whom we represent at your feet have allowed themselves to hope that, in the midst of the important work in which you are engaged, you will not disdain their complaints, you will listen with some interest to the timid complaints they dare to make in the midst of the profound humiliation in which they are buried.

"We will not abuse your moments, My Lords, to discuss the nature and justice of our demands; they are recorded in the memoirs we have the honor of placing before your eyes. May we owe you a less painful existence than that to which we are condemned! May the veil of opprobrium that has covered us for so long finally be torn from our heads! May men look upon us as their brothers! May this divine charity, so particularly recommended to you, also extend to us! May an absolute reform take place in the ignominious institutions to which we are enslaved, and may this reform, so far too uselessly desired, which we solicit with tears in our eyes, be your benefit and your work!"

This humble, pleading language could not help but move us. In response, M. de Fréteau, President de Quinzaine, said:

"The great reasons you put forward in support of your requests do not allow the National Assembly to hear them without interest; it will take your request into consideration and will find itself happy to call your brothers back to tranquility and happiness, and provisionally you can inform your constituents of this."[123]

The response was vague in its benevolence. But Grégoire was there, and had learned from a good school what it means to be positive. He immediately stood up and said:

"Given that the matter of the Jews cannot be postponed for a fixed term, I ask that they be promised, at the very least, to deal with it in the course of the present session."[124]

The request was granted by the Assembly, "despite the complaints of some people whom I am very happy not to know", wrote Grégoire.[125]

123 *Moniteur*, October 13TH to 15TH, 1789.

124 GRÉGOIRE, *Motion*, etc. historical notice, p. xv.

125 *Ibid*., p. 15.

VI

Official introduction of the question of the emancipation of the Jewish people, on Christmas Eve 1789. Civil rights are demanded for Jews, Protestants, actors and the executioner. Reflections on the singular encounter, at the bar of the Assembly, of the Jews and the executioner. The cross and the guillotine.

The Assembly has moved to the Salle du Manège in Paris, where it has been holding its sessions for the past two months. In the sessions of December 21, 23 and 24, the Jewish affair was officially called. It was Christmas Eve!

The anniversary of the coming into this world of the Liberator was thus chosen by divine Providence, to introduce before the peoples the cause of the emancipation or liberation of the ancient people of God. The French Chamber took no notice, nor, to all appearances, did it remember the outrage against the Divinity which, shortly before, the *Moniteur* had recorded in its columns by comparing the night of August 4th to the sacred night of the Redeemer t of the world. We reported this earlier. It is worth recalling here the most poignant features:

"In one night, the face of France changed;

"In one night, the famous tree of feudalism, whose shadow covered the whole of France, was uprooted;

"In one night, man took back the place marked out for him by nature and reason;

"In one night, the long enterprises of the court of Rome, its abuses, its greed, have found an end and an insurmountable barrier that wisdom and human reason have just laid down for all eternity;

"In one night, France was *saved*, *regenerated*."[126]

Perhaps it was to punish this sacrilegious contrast that Divine Providence, in its turn, called the question of the emancipation of its ancient people on Christmas Eve. There's still only an almost

126 *Moniteur*, 1789, no. 38.

imperceptible point of light, but it will grow!

And so, all is indecisive and complex in the return of this people, it's a twilight; one can distinguish in it the battles of mercy and justice. While his cause was being called on Christmas Eve, on the other hand, a funereal figure was appearing at his side, claiming civil rights like him, and in the same session: the executor of high works!

In the old society, the deprivation of civil rights affected many categories of people, including: Jews, Protestants, actors and the executioner; Jews and Protestants, because their beliefs were in opposition to the fundamental laws and customs of the country; actors and the executioner, because they exercised professions deemed *infamous*.

In the sessions of December 21, 23 and 24, these four categories of incapacitated people appeared together, and on the same line, before the National Assembly, to claim civil rights.

How could this assemblage of Jews and executioners not be of interest to us? Israelite historians have made a mystery of it in their memoirs!

And so, the executor of the high works came forward, too, to obtain his rehabilitation. A few days earlier, in that same month of December, the instruments of torture that form his domain had been transformed and perfected; he had come to ask to be transformed himself! Here, according to the documents of the time, is how this double funeral transformation was proposed and adopted, that of the instruments, and that of the executioner; we enclose, for the benefit of our former co-religionists, a few thoughts, always submitted with respect, especially in such matters!

Transformation of instruments of torture. - In the session of December 1, 1789, Doctor *Guillotin* read a long speech on the reform of the penal code, of which the *Moniteur* has not seen fit to retain a single word. It was in this speech that he proposed to decree that there would be only one kind of punishment for capital crimes; to replace the executioner's arm with the action of a machine, the machine we now call the *guillotine*. "*With my machine*," said Guillotin, "*I'll blow your head off in the blink of an eye, and you won't suffer.*" The Assembly laughed. But it listened attentively to the rest of the report, which ended with the following proposals:

> Art. I. - Offences of the same kind will be punished by the same type of penalty, whatever the rank or status of the guilty party.
>
> Art. II - In all cases where the law pronounces the death penalty against an accused person, the punishment will be the same; the criminal will be decapitated. He will be decapitated by a simple mechanism.[127]

Doctor Guillotin, deputy of Paris, was a skilled physician and the gentlest of men. It was out of a sense of humanity that he proposed decapitation in place of the gallows, the wheel and the stake; and thus "the name of a good man was given to this instrument of death of such execrable fame."[128]

Let our former co-religionists now reflect on the following comparison:

The Christian world, nearly two thousand years ago, and the revolutionary world, a century ago, opened with two famous, thought-crushing transformations: the cross and the guillotine.

In ancient times, the cross was considered an infamous piece of wood; in Rome and almost everywhere else, only slaves and the vilest malefactors were tortured by the cross. All of a sudden, this instrument of torture was transformed: precious stones adorned it with envy, all jewels gave it pride of place, and it even became part of the diadem of kings! And not only is this instrument of torment transfigured, but even more extraordinarily, it transfigures the world. The old virtues take refuge under its shadow, where they blossom anew, and new ones blossom there, of marvelous beauty: humility, chastity, charity, the heroism of martyrdom! The radiance of this

127 *Histoire parlementaire de la Révolution française*, by Buchez et Roux, t. III, p. 417-8.

128 Poujoulat, *Histoire de la Révolution française*, chap. viii. - Guillotin, who had been guided only by a love of humanity, soon realized the harm he had unwittingly done, and cursed his work. He spoke out energetically against the excesses of the Terror, was imprisoned and, had it not been for the 9th of Thermidor, would have been executed. He spent the rest of his life in retirement. It was he who came up with the idea of the medical association that became the Academy of Medicine.

cross becomes so superb that it surpasses that of the sun: the star of the day, in its course, illuminates only one hemisphere at a time, the rays of the cross envelop all the worlds! When it is said of a bold navigator that he went to plant the cross on foreign shores, everyone will understand that, on those shores, he went to introduce and begin civilization. In all civilized kingdoms, it becomes the sign of national honor and reward. And finally, when Bossuet wants to praise, before the most magnificent court in the universe, the way of life that takes precedence over all others, he will say of a princess: *Now she has preferred the cross to the throne*.

Such is the transformation that marked the genesis of the Christian world.

As the revolutionary world opened up, it also wanted to have its own, also inherent in an instrument of torture: the guillotine.

What else could have been used to celebrate the invention of this sepulchral mechanism, these *timbers of justice*, as they are known today? It was in the name of a country in danger that they were erected on the Place de la Révolution. The knife fell to the cry of *Long live the Nation*! In its impious and savage ambition to ape the popularity and diffusion of the cross, the revolutionary intoxication went so far as to have multitudes of little guillotines made, toys for children, ornaments for the home.[129] Some people, touched by the guillotine's good services, presented sums of money for its upkeep!...[130] On the other hand, the most touching scenes took place at the foot of this instrument of torment: the young girl and the young woman suddenly became as great as devotion, as sublime as martyrdom; the old man regretted having to give only a remnant of his life, as a testimony to his faith; almost all of them climbed the steps of the scaffold, pointing to heaven and forgiving their executioners. "There was an hour of anguish, the evening hour, when the messenger of revolutionary justice arrived to designate the prisoners who, the next day, were to appear before the tribunal; relatives and friends took each other by the hand, and, by an instinct of self-preserva-

129 "Children's toys were little bird guillotines." CHATEAUBRIAND, *Essai sur la littérature anglaise*, Part IV.

130 *Moniteur*, no. 198.

tion, leaned against each other. The heart was torn asunder at the farewells."[131] But in the presence of the scaffold, resignation, calm and hope quickly regained their hold, and from the altar of sacrifice, legions of angels ascended to heaven![132]

Why is it, however, that, notwithstanding these touching scenes, and contrary to the hymns of the Revolution, the guillotine became an object of abhorrence, while the cross continued its pure and luminous radiance?

Why is it that, before the instrument of torment on the platform of Golgotha, generations have passed on and on, bowing in admiration and love, while before the instrument of torment on the Place de la Révolution, they have bowed their heads in fear and horror?

Of the two instruments of torment, one was deemed more infamous, and that was the cross! Indeed, out of respect for his title as a Roman citizen, Saint Paul was only beheaded, while Saint Peter was crucified.

How is it that no one has ever found strange the cry of admiration and eagerness urged by Saint Andrew towards the instrument of his torture? As soon as he saw it, he cried out: "O cross, o good cross, which has become so beautiful, all after which I have long sighed, you whom I have so ardently loved, you whom I have so

131 Poujoulat, *Histoire de la Révolution française*.

132 Here are just a few examples. Sixteen Carmelite nuns from Royal-Lieu, near Compiégne, walked towards the executioner, singing the *Salve Regina*. How touching their voices must have been when they said: *Eia ergo advjcata nostra!* The angelic concert continued right up to the foot of the scaffold, and did not cease altogether until the final blow of the axe. Twenty peasant women from Poitou were advancing towards death; one of them was breast-feeding her child; she would have liked to give it all the life she was about to lose; when she reached the foot of the scaffold, her child was torn from her breast!... Former servants of royalty, women who had known the festivities of Versailles, were placed in Madame Elisabeth's carriage. The pious, irreproachable princess took the place of the priest for her fellow sufferers, and was the angel of their last hour. Her companions had the consolation of embracing her; each condemned man, as he dismounted from the carriage, respectfully saluted the princess before ascending to the scaffold. We know of no scene of more touching grandeur. Madame Elisabeth was the last to perish. She was 30 years old. Poujoulat, *Histoire de la Révolution*.

persistently sought, and whom my impatience finally finds prepared, receive me, take me from among men to give me to my divine Master, so that through you I may receive Him who through you redeemed me."[133] Who ever thought of crying out like that to the guillotine? And why is it that, in order to know how to die under the guillotine knife, every condemned man, innocent or guilty, needs, at the foot of the scaffold, to kiss the cross?[134]

Saint John Chrysostom said to the people of Constantinople: "Who among you would touch the fatal instruments of criminal death? On the contrary, who does not abhor them? And who would not think himself dishonored if he were forced to keep some part of the gallows where they were hung?"[135] Who among us would want to keep in his home, and show to his visitors, one of the pieces of wood where the guillotine knife was hung? Why, on the contrary, do we feel a sense of joy in possessing, and a movement of honor in showing, a piece of the wood of the true cross?

Where do these profound differences come from? Where do these striking oppositions come from? They have tormented my thoughts; they will cause similar torment in anyone who will reflect. They cannot be explained without a major reason. Let your most learned rabbis rise up, O Israel, and give you this explanation! I adjure them to speak. For my part, I opened our old Bible at the words of Isaiah: "*We have looked upon him, he was* THE MAN OF SORROWS*, he bore the iniquity of us all... He will be displayed like a standard before all the peoples; the nations will come to offer him their prayers, and his tomb will be glorious*";[136] then, satisfied with this ray of light and closing

133 Roman breviary.

134 Here is one of the highest spectacles on earth: at the two corners of this scaffold, the two justices are in presence, human justice and divine justice: one, implacable and leaning on a sword, is accompanied by despair; the other, holding a cross soaked in tears, shows herself between pity and hope; one has for minister a man of blood, the other a man of peace; one condemns, the other absolves; innocent or guilty, the first says to the victim: "Die!" The second cries out: "Sons of innocence or of repentance, ascend to heaven." CHATEAUBRIAND. *Génie du Christianisme*.

135 SAINT CHRYSOST., lib. *Quod Christus* sit Deus, Chapter IX.

136 Isaiah 53 & 11.

the Bible, I said to myself: here is the reason for the so profoundly dissimilar feelings that the cross and the guillotine arouse in all the peoples of the world:

Under the guillotine, the victims, however holy and innocent, were mere creatures;

On the cross, the victim was the Son of God!

This is why the cross is sought after, infinitely multiplied, glorified, adored; God has reigned through the wood, *regnavit a ligno Deus*![137]

137 Translator's note: from the 6TH century liturgical hymn *Vexilla regis prodeunt*.

VII

ROBESPIERRE SUPPORTS THE PROPOSED REHABILITATION OF THE JEWS AND THE EXECUTIONER. ISRAELITE HISTORIANS, IN THEIR ACCOUNTS OF THIS SESSION, HAVE ALL OMITTED THE FUNEREAL COINCIDENCE. PROBABLE REASON FOR THIS OMISSION. THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY REHABILITATES THE EXECUTIONER, BUT NOT THE JEWS; CONSIDERATION OF THEIR FATE IS POSTPONED. ANGER FROM THE *COURRIER DE PARIS* NEWSPAPER.

In the same month of December 1789, these different coincidences were grouped together: Doctor Guillotin had his invention accepted; the executor of high works, having seen his instruments of torture transformed, came, in turn, to request his own transformation through the demand for civil rights; finally, the Jews met at the bar of the Assembly with him, for the same object.

The Israelite historians who report on this session mention the request for rehabilitation for actors, Protestants and Jews; but all are silent on the executioner's participation in the same request. It is, however, recorded throughout, along with the other three, in the *Moniteur*, and we even shudder to see, in the official report, among the deputies who take the stand to plead the cause of both the executioner and the Jews, who? Robespierre. Robespierre interceding on behalf of the executioner and the Jews, what a singular intercession! Here's part of his motion:

For the executioner: "It will never be said successfully, in this assembly, that a necessary function of the law can be flouted by the law. This law must be changed, and prejudice, no longer having any basis, will disappear."

For the Jews: "You have been told things about the Jews that are infinitely exaggerated and often contrary to history. The vices of the Jews are born of the degradation into which you have plunged them; they will be good when they can find some advantage in being good... I therefore believe that they cannot be deprived of the

sacred rights that the title of man gives them."[138]

These are the words and these are the facts. - Why, then, did the Israelite historians deem it appropriate to withhold the name of the executioner and cut him off from the group that presented itself for rehabilitation? Why? Ah, because the coincidence was too striking, too instructive, too eloquent, too overwhelming. The Jews appearing on stage with the executioner, what a reminder of the past, what memories! Will not every child of Israel, on reading these lines, feel a trouble and unease that historians have tried to spare him?[139]

Well, here's the outcome:

The collective request for rehabilitation had been submitted to the Assembly on December 21ST; it was discussed on the 23RD and 24TH, and the result was this:

The executioner was rehabilitated, but not the Jews; the examination of their fate was postponed.[140] Yes, this being "whose dwelling other dwellers flee from... who lives in a kind of void with his female and her young,"[141] this being, here he is, now has his place in society; he will have the last, but he has one, and the people of Israel do not yet have one!... It would be a mistake, however, to attribute to the legislators of 1789 a premeditated, Christian thought, when they put the executioner ahead of the Jews in the admission to the rights of citizenship. No religious motive guided their conduct when, on December 24, 1789, they rehabilitated the executioner and postponed the rehabilitation of the Jews. But Providence allowed that, since the Revolution wanted to systematically exclude Jesus Christ

138 *Moniteur*, 1789, December, p. 503— I.

139 Israelite historians such as Bédarride (*Les Juifs en France*), Halévy (*Histoire des juifs*) and others have all kept silent about this disastrous encounter.

140 Here is the decree from the National Assembly (December 24),

1. (For Protestants). That non-Catholics are capable of all civil and military jobs like other citizens.

2. (For actors and the executioner). That no citizen's eligibility may be challenged on any grounds other than those resulting from constitutional decrees.

And the Assembly adds: Quelle does not intend to innovate in any way with regard to the Jews, on whose status it reserves the right to pronounce. (*Moniteur* December 24, 1789.)

141 De Maistre.

and forget the stain of blood on the foreheads of the Jews in their rehabilitation process, the stain of blood suddenly reappeared, by the fortuitous presence of the executioner next to the Jews, and by the contrast of the rehabilitation of one with the postponement of the others. Many of the deputies had to make this thought.

For those of us who have unearthed this detail, hitherto carefully shrouded in shadow and silence, and who feel it our duty to bring it to light after a century of oblivion, we shall accompany it with this admission that impartial truth commands us: The day of December 24, 1789 was profoundly humiliating for our race, but it was a day of sublime justice! Yes, the executioner deserved to be rehabilitated before us; for the executioner only puts guilty men to death, and we had put the Son of God, the innocent, to death! *It is a good thing, Lord, that you have humbled us...*[142] Oh, may this penitential thought, which we have traced against the pride of the Israelites, touch your mercy, O Father of Jesus Christ, and count for the conversion of our brothers in Israel!

The Israelites were deeply wounded. The written proof of this has also remained. A few days after the adjournment, one of Paris's most widely-read newspapers, devoted to the Jews, contained these words, a veritable explosion of anger and disgust: "At a time when the rights of man are recognized; at a time when the vilest of beings, covered at all times in the mud of infamy, has had the audacity to make its sinister voice heard in the courts (the executioner), how is it possible that the Jews, this ancient people that prejudice alone has striven to debase, still need defenders? Why should the people of God, why should this people, degraded by humiliating insults, be forced to come down to prayer to obtain the quality of man: the quality of man that we do not refuse to one of these infamous creatures whose existence we only forgive because a stepmotherly nature has allowed crimes and toads to exist."[143]

What language!

Such was the episode of the meeting between the executioner

142 Psalms 119:71.

143 *Le Courrier de Paris* in the provinces and from the provinces to Paris, no. xxv (February 2, 1790), p 389-90.

and the Jews at the bar of the Assembly.

Chapter V

Physiognomy of the National Assembly in the Question of Jewish Emancipation. During the two years of its existence, it hesitated to issue a decree (1789–1791)

I

Ideological, theatrical and presumptuous. the National Assembly (now the Constituent Assembly) suddenly found itself faced with a practical fact, the most serious and obscure in its consequences: the admission and fusion of Jews into society.

What, then, was the value of this Assembly, to which the Israelites had to devour such affronts from the outset?

Incidentally, the Assembly has changed its name. It is now called the Constituent Assembly, because of the constitution that France is awaiting, and for which the Declaration of the Rights of Man was the preface.

The Constituent Assembly has been judged in many different ways, depending on the point of view from which it was viewed. We ask permission to present our own, provided by the emancipation of the Jewish people, which the Constituent Assembly had to deal with. It's a complement that may well be of interest, and perhaps cast a new light on the famous Assembly.

We say of the Constituent Assembly: that it was generous, very generous, for the Israelites, but against its will; that it showed itself to be worried and serious, very worried and very serious, in the examination of this question; and that it was sovereignly short-sighted and imprudent in its solution, but in a fatal way, by virtue of the principles it had proudly proclaimed and which it had to undergo

in this circumstance.

We are convinced that, after reading the chapters that follow, many readers will share our view.

Let's first determine the historical background or physiognomy of the Assembly at the time the question of Jewish emancipation was introduced before it. We have already had occasion to point out that, when we want to judge a person or a society of the past with certainty, we need to remake its environment, i.e. the totality of the dispositions it presented at the time of its existence. It was easy for us to remake the historical milieu of the Constituent Assembly, thanks to M. Taine: *Les Origines de la France contemporaine; la Révolution.*

Some books are providential. This is certainly one of them. The author reveals what the Constituent Assembly was like, not just according to more or less legendary accounts, but according to original and indisputable documents, numbered and fortunately discovered by him in the National and Departmental Archives. These details shed light on the Assembly's physiognomy. Its acts are presented with order, clarity and a relentless light; it's almost like the *Scrutabor Jérusalem in lucernis* of the Prophet: "I will carry the light of the lamps into the most hidden places of Jerusalem."[144] This book has been a good deed. We have relied on the author's impartiality to remake, with his burin, the milieu or true physiognomy of the Constituent Assembly.

Let us imagine:

a) An *ideological* Assembly, convinced of the omnipotence of philosophy;

> All that (the past) is backward; the century of reason has come, and the Assembly is too enlightened to drag itself into routine... It operates in the manner of Rousseau, according to an abstract notion of law, the State and the social contract... On principle, they legislate, and we can guess what their discussions might be. There are no hard facts, no precise arguments; you'd never guess that the people talking are there to settle real business... From speech to speech, the string of empty abstractions is prolonged and renewed ad infinitum, as in a conference of practicing rhetoric students"

144 Zephaniah 1:12.

(TAINE, *La Révolution*, t. I, p. 161).

b) An Assembly with *no practical experience* or knowledge of business;

> If one looked hard enough, in 1789 one could find five or six hundred men of experience in France; first the intendants, then the principal members of the provincial assemblies, all people of sense and weight, having handled men and business... But most of these lights remained under a bushel; only a few reached the Assembly, where they burned without illuminating, and were soon blown away by a stormy wind. Old Machault is not here, nor Malesherbes; not a steward... The vast majority is made up of unknown lawyers and subaltern lawyers, notaries, land registrars, bailiffs and bailiwick lieutenants, simple practitioners locked up since their youth in the narrow circle of a mediocre jurisdiction or paperwork routine, with no other escape than philosophical walks through imaginary spaces under the guidance of Rousseau and Raynal... You might as well take eleven hundred notables from a province on dry land and entrust them with the repair of an old frigate; they will demolish it in good conscience, and the one they build instead will sink before it leaves port. (*Ibid*., p. 154, 155, 156.)

c) A *theatrical* Assembly;

> They love emphases, big-band rhetoric, declamatory and sentimental eloquence: such is the style of almost all their speeches... Almost every session begins with the public reading of admiring addresses or threatening denunciations... The session is no longer a business conference, but a patriotic opera in which eclogue, melodrama and sometimes masquerade mingle amid clapping hands and bravos (*Ibid*., p. 151).

d) An *overexcited* Assembly;

> To tell the truth, these are nervous women, and from one end of the Revolution to the other, their overexcitement will grow. Not only are they exalted, but they need exaltation. And, like a drinker who, once overheated, seeks out strong liquors, they seem to take it upon themselves to expel from their brains the last remnants of composure and common sense... Thus overexcited, they don't know

> in the morning what they'll do in the evening, and are at the mercy of every surprise. When enthusiasm seizes them, a vertigo runs through the benches: all prudence is disconcerted, all foresight disappears, all objections are stifled (Ibid., p. 150, 151).

e) A *presumptuous* Assembly, infatuated with its mission, doubting nothing:

> The assembly had such a high opinion of itself, especially the left side, that it would have gladly taken on the task of making the Dildo of all nations... Never had so many men imagined that they were all legislators and that they were there to repair all the aunts of the past, remedy all the errors of the human spirit and ensure the happiness of future centuries... It's impossible to paint the confusion of ideas, the derangement of imaginations, the burlesque of popular motions: you'd have thought you were seeing the world the day after creation. Indeed, they assume that human society does not exist and that they are in charge of creating it. There is no hesitation: they are convinced that the thing is easy, and that with two or three axioms of political philosophy, the first person to come along can do it (Ibid., p. 160 and p. 164-165).

Thanks to this set of quotations, we really have the historical background of the Constituent Assembly in 1789.

Thus: ideological, a novice in business, theatrical, impatient, unsure of anything, such is the physiognomy of the famous Assembly. We're not inventing any traits, just reproducing them. Besides the faults, there are the qualities: "The Assembly is made up of men who are young at heart, sincere, enthusiastic, generous even, and, what's more, diligent, hard-working, sometimes gifted with rare talents" (p. 162). However, while agreeing with these qualities, the implacable historian adds: "But neither zeal, nor work, nor talent are useful when they are not employed by a true idea: and, if they are put to the service of a false idea, they do all the more harm the greater they are" (p. 162).

If we find the picture painted by M. Taine a little harsh, there's nothing to prevent us from tempering it with the shades of M. de Tocqueville, we don't reject them:

> I don't believe that at any time in history we have seen, on any part of the earth, such a number of men so sincerely passionate about the public good, so truly forgetful of themselves, so absorbed in the contemplation of the common interest. This was the incomparable grandeur of those first days of 1789.
>
> The spectacle was short-lived... It was only a moment; but I doubt that such a moment has ever been encountered in the life of any people (TOCQUEVILLE, t. VII, *Fragments d'histoir*e, p. 145, 147).

"It was only a moment, it was a short spectacle!" M. de Tocqueville is obliged to admit it; naturalness, with the procession of defects pointed out by M. Taine, soon spoiled everything. Why did this happen? Because underneath this real, undeniable foundation of selflessness, courage and devotion, the fundamental stone - Christ - had, alas, been removed!

So there you have the Constituent Assembly, with its flaws and its generous aspirations.

Now imagine the question of the emancipation of the ancient Hebrew people suddenly arising in the midst of such an Assembly. If any issue was capable of upsetting the Assembly's way of being, it was this one. In every aspect, it was the antithesis of the Constituent Assembly's provisions.

Indeed, this question presented, without question :

The most serious fact: a people, unsociable for 4,000 years, to be welcomed into society; — and the Assembly was light, theatrical, almost a comedian;

The most practical fact: the children of Israel are certainly practical! — and the Assembly was not;

The most obscure fact: what will come of this entry of the Jews into society? — and the Assembly was inspired only by philosophy.

Let's repeat: if there was one issue that was completely at odds, not with the ideas, but with the attitudes of the men of 1789, it was this one.

II

Her embarrassment, she becomes concerned and thoughtful. Remarkably, this was the only issue that preoccupied, and even wearied, the Constituent Assembly throughout its entire existence, from 1789 to 1791.

It is to the credit of the Constituent Assembly that it found itself embarrassed, recognized its embarrassment, and became concerned and thoughtful in the face of the solution it was being asked to find.

We recounted in the previous chapter how the rehabilitation of the Jews had been sought at her bar, along with that of the Protestants, the actors and the executioner, and how she had rehabilitated them all, even the executioner, by declaring that she felt she had to postpone the Jews. This postponement was the expression of her embarrassment.

This embarrassment would continue, and even be prolonged, for the entire duration of the Constituent Assembly's existence. It's a peculiarity that has gone unnoticed, and it's important to point it out.

Yes, something very singular, this Assembly that nothing surprised, that nothing stopped, ardent, thoughtless, presumptuous, suddenly felt uneasy, indecisive, weak, before a solution relating to the Jews. Of all the other questions, none embarrassed her; this one alone stopped her in her tracks, and even tired her, bothered her. On questions of public and natural law, she is said to have promulgated 3250 articles and decrees; but for the decree concerning the Jews, she would only draft it in pieces, at different times, and at considerable intervals. When it came to abolishing feudal rights, tithes and the privileges of individuals and provinces, the night of August 4 was enough. In twelve hours, the entire old order of the monarchy was overthrown. "What would have required a year of care and meditation was proposed, deliberated and voted for by general acclamation."[145] But for the overthrow of the barriers that kept the Jews at bay, a year, two years, of hesitation and meditation would not be enough; the entire

145 Taine, *la Révolution*, p. 150.

duration of the Constituent Assembly would not be enough. It will only be in the last hour of its existence that the Assembly will decide to take a stand, and even then, it will have to be forced to do so! In short, it was the only question that bothered it, that stopped it in its tracks. The Constituent Assembly lasted a little over two years: from June 1789 to September 30, 1791; and the question of Jewish emancipation, officially introduced in December 1789, was not resolved until September 27, 1791: just three days before the separation of the Assembly.

It will be interesting to investigate, a few pages further on, the reason for this prolonged embarrassment.

But let's return to where we left off, which was the adjournment of December 24, 1789. The Protestants, the actors and the executioner were thus admitted to the enjoyment of civil rights. As for the Jews, the Assembly made the following provision: "that it did not intend to prejudge anything in relation to the Jews, on whose status it reserved the right to pronounce."[146]

We had left it at that. Let's continue to tell the story accurately.

146 *Moniteur*, 1789, p. 508.

III

Supporters of the Jews within the Assembly: opponents; the supporters all belong to Masonic lodges; proof.

For the account that follows, we had two options: either to report, one after the other, the sessions of the Constituent Assembly in which the Jews were discussed; or to present a few characters, a few portraits, taking care, however, to group around them what was important and interesting in the sessions.

We prefer the latter, as it is more striking and more likely to leave its mark on the reader's memory.

First, here's how the Assembly divided on the question of the Jews. - It goes without saying that, of the 1118 deputies who made up the Constituent Assembly, we only cite the names of those who took some active part in the debates, for or against.

Deputies who support the Jews		
Names		*Sessions in which they spoke*
Rahaud-Saint-Etienne		August 23, 1789
De Castellane		August 23, 1789
De Clermont-Tonnerre	{	September 28, 1789
		December 21, 1789
		December 23, 1789
L'abbé Grégoire	{	September 28, 1789
		January 28, 1790
		January 18, 1791
Mounier		September 28, 1789
De Freteau	{	October 14, 1789
		December 21, 1789
Desmeuniers		December 23, 1789
Robespierre		December 23, 1789

Duport	{	December 23, 1789
		July 21, 1790
		September 27, 1791
Barnave		December 24, 1789
Mirabeau		December 24, 1789
Talleyrand, bishop of Autun	{	January 28, 1790
		May 7, 1791
Vicomte de Noailles		January 28, 1790
De Fumel		January 28, 1790
Lechapelier		January 28, 1790
De Beauharnais		January 28, 1790
De Seze		January 28, 1790
Duc de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt.	{	January 28, 1790
		February 26, 1790
Rœderer		April 15, 1790
Vismes		July 20, 1790
Dumetz		July 21, 1790
Régnault de Saint-Jean-d'Angely	{	July 21, 1790
		September 27, 1791
Martineau		January 18, 1791
Vernier		May 20, 1791

The following also spoke favorably:

Siéyès, Necker, Camille Desmoulins, Target, Cahier de Cerville, Maréchal de Mouchy, de Saint-Priest, Lameth, Bergasse, d'Antraigues, Brevet de Beaujour.

All these names were listed in the *Moniteur* as favoring Jewish emancipation. Now, there's a singular connection to be made:

Father Deschamps' truthful and learned book on *the Secret Societies* contains the authentic list of members of the National Assembly

who, in 1789, belonged to Masonic lodges. Well, all the names we have just enumerated, which appear in the *Moniteur* as having voted for the Jews, are to be found on the Masonic list revealed by Père Deschamps.[147] Isn't this coincidence proof that the Paris lodges were in favor of Jewish emancipation? In addition to this highly probable proof, based on names, we will add hereafter (in Chapter VII) the irrefragable proof based on facts.

Deputies Opposed to the Jews		
Names	*Sessions in which they spoke*	
Rewbell	{	December 21, 1789
		December 24, 1789
		January 28, 1790
		April 15, 1790
		July 20 and 21, 1790
		September 27, 1791
Abbé Maury	{	December 23, 1789
		January 28, 1790
		April 15, 1790
Mgr de la Fare, bishop of Nancy		December 23, 1789
Mgr Cortois de Balore, bishop of Nimes		December 23, 1789
The prince of Broglie	{	December 24, 1789
		January 18, 1789
Mgr Fr. de Bonnal, bishop of Clermont		December 24, 1789

147 Deschamps, *les Sociétés secrétes*, t. II, Book II, Chapter VI, § 3 : *Composition des loges en 1789*.

De la Galissonière	{	December 24, 1789
		January 28, 1790
De Baumetz		December 24, 1789
Schwends (deputy from Alsace)		January 29, 1790
Fonstaing		January 18, 1791
Alquier		January 18, 1791
Folleville		January 18, 1791

Nearly all the deputies from Alsace were also among the opponents.

Among all the names on the two lists, four in particular shone in the discussion of the Jewish question: Mirabeau, le curé Grégoire, l'abbé Maury, Rewbell. Their portraits, as auxiliaries or adversaries of the Jews, are extremely curious. They sum up the interest of most of the sessions.

Let's start with the Comte de Mirabeau:

IV

Some portraits of deputies in relation to the Jewish question. Mirabeau: how to explain his attachment to the Jews.

It has been said of Mirabeau "that he was the lion of the Revolution, with a powerful and terrible voice;" the comparison is apt, for those who came after him were its tigers.

It was also said that "he gave himself to no party, but negotiated with all, and loved only himself." This is still true.

Nevertheless, this giant, selfish nature did feel compassion, and it was for the Jews: just as we sometimes see a lion tolerate, in its dwelling, the company of a small, familiar dog!... It's safe to say that he sincerely loved them. There were several reasons for his affection: firstly, he loved them because of Mendelssohn.

Mendelssohn, of Jewish origin, had acquired a reputation in Berlin as the Socrates of Germany. Mirabeau, during the secret diplomatic mission[148] he carried out in the Prussian capital in 1786-1788, was made aware of this simple, patriarchal existence that had just come to an end. Indeed, when he arrived in Berlin, Mendelssohn was no more. But he was able to appreciate the universal esteem in which the name and writings of the illustrious Israelite philosopher were held. From this predilection for Mendelssohn sprang his affection for the entire Jewish nation."[149]

Everything needs to be said. It is probable that Mirabeau was only so sensitive to the memory of Mendelssohn, whom he had never seen, because he had previously been sensitive to the radiance and charms of a Berlin Jewess, famous at the same time for her beauty,

148 "Calonne bought him, and sent him as a spy to the courts of Germany and especially Prussia, to study the future prince. Nothing is more disgusting than Mirabeau's fifty-one letters to Calonne; in addition to vanity pushed to the point of delirium, he displays a low immorality, and grossly judges people and things. He is concerned only with the ignoble appetites of the new king, and advises Calonné to send a woman as a spy, indicating the physical qualities she should possess." (Cantu, *Histoire universelle*, t. XVIII, p. 6.)

149 Graetz, *Histoire des juifs*, t. XI, p. 191.

her wit and her salon: Henriette de Lémos, married to Dr. Herz. Mirabeau became her captive,[150] and it is safe to assume that it was she who best inspired his admiration for the departed philosopher, and who, igniting an oriental flame in his heart, made him promise to rehabilitate the nation to which Mendelssohn, and she herself, belonged. Chateaubriand wrote of Mirabeau:

"Nature seemed to have molded his head for empire or for the gallows, carved his arms to embrace a nation or to abduct a woman. When he shook his mane, looking at the people, he stopped them; when he raised his paw and showed his nails, the plebs ran furiously."[151] We now know that among the women abducted by this colossus, the Berlin Jewess was the most perceptive and, perhaps, the most dangerous. She guessed, she heard the volcano rumbling in that chest, and mingled the boils and breaths of fire that were about to emerge with those of her nation.

But the Berlin connections alone do not explain Mirabeau's devotion to the Jewish race. He still loved it because of the contempt in which it was held: this contempt was like a bond between him and it. This may seem strange, a paradox, but let's reflect on the situation of this man and this race. Mirabeau - all historians agree - had arrived at the Estates-General under the crushing weight of the fame of his vices. His first appearance in the ranks of the Third Estate had aroused murmurs. At first, this future king of the tribune had great difficulty gaining the floor; he inspired disgust in good people; they didn't want to hear him, as if they feared the stench of his debaucheries. Already, in connection with his pamphlet on agiotage, directed against Necker, he had drawn this reply from the virtuous Rulhière: "You, speak of fatherland, Count de Mirabeau! If you weren't covered in triple brass, how could you not blush at uttering that name? What constitutes a citizen is a family with ties to the common family, relatives, friends, clients, property to use

150 "Mirabeau showed himself to be the assiduous host of this residence, much more for Henriette Herz than for her husband. GRAETZ, *Ibid*. p. 157. - Read pages 379, 380,381 of *Entrée des Israélites*, etc., relating to "Mirabeau and the Berlin Jewess."

151 CHATEAUBRIAND, *Essai sur la littérature anglaise*.

for themselves and the fatherland; duties as son, brother, husband, father to fulfill; an honorable career to follow. But do you, Comte de Mirabeau, have any of these characteristics? You, without asylum, without parents, have for your ordinary domicile the prisons, where, in turn, locked up or consigned by paternal prudence, guilty or foolish, you have distilled the poisons of your soul, gnawed with your teeth the bars of your dungeons, to train yourself to tear even better what is most honorable and most respected."

Crushed under this appalling reputation, Mirabeau needed all the power of his genius to free himself from the mountain of contempt weighing down on him, and barely lifted by the rarest prodigies of eloquence. When his enemies or his envious ones scorned his past life, he bowed his head, feeling that he had deserved these reproaches. This mountain of contempt stood like an impenetrable barrier between his genius and the confidence of Louis XVI. Towards the end of his life, he is said to have exclaimed: "*Ah! if I had carried into the Revolution a reputation similar to that of Malesherbes, what a fate I would have assured for my country!*"[152]

Such was the contempt in which Mirabeau lived. Now, isn't it natural, in the still good depths of human nature, that once you've experienced contempt and know you deserve it, you feel compassion for those who have had the misfortune to be born and birthed in the midst of that contempt: and then you don't refuse the help they come to ask you for! This explains Mirabeau's great sympathy for the Jewish cause. In *La Réforme politique des juifs*, a work he published in their favor, he cannot, in reference to the lure of glory that exists for every man, hold back this almost poignant cry, addressed to the poor Jew: "An unfortunate being, without a homeland, who can nowhere acquire, nor freely exercise his talents; in whose virtue there is no faith, and for whom there exists no kind of glory!..."[153] This is how we explain, with sufficient evidence, Mirabeau's sympathy for this unfortunate race. After that, if the gold of the Jews had not contributed to fostering and cementing this sympathy more solidly, not only do we have no reason to revolt at this thought,

152 CANTU, *Histoire universelle*, t. XVIII. p. 27.

153 *De la Réforme politique des juifs*, by Mirabeau, p. 61.

we even have no difficulty in admitting it. It is a perfect historical certainty that the great and poor Mirabeau was in need all his life, because of his pleasures; it is also a perfect certainty that, on urgent advice, Louis XVI resigned himself to buying Mirabeau, and gave him 600,000 francs, in addition to a pension of 50,000 francs per month.[154] It's not rash to think that, if the King of France had to give gold to win over Mirabeau, all the more reason for the sons of Israel to slip in some! They no doubt remembered an episode from the Bible, their ancient story: the lion who was met on the road with a honeycomb in his mouth.[155] It is likely that they imitated the bees, and that, in the mouth of the lion of the Revolution, eloquence was aided by a persuasive ingot!

In addition to these various explanations, it remains a fact, according to the *Moniteur*, that Mirabeau was the declared and devoted champion of the Jewish cause within the National Assembly. Others, perhaps, were more detailed; he laid down the broad lines, defended them, and ensured their maintenance. His words were powerful. Whether the Assembly was weary or frightened, it has been said, it was enough for this hideous and sublime head to appear in the gallery, and for his powerful voice to read out some of those words that need to be pronounced, not written, to imprint a violent jolt and warm it up.[156] Thus it happened several times on this question of Jewish emancipation, about which the Assembly seemed weary or ill-informed. Baumetz, an opposing deputy, having said that, "up

154 CANTU, t. XVIII, p. 26 - "Mirabeau's relations with Monsieur resulted in nothing more than the promise of an embassy and a salary of 50,000 fr. per month from Louis XVI's coffers for some time: this result was not the least of the wishes of the orator tormented by great debts and great needs. Married in 1772, he still hadn't paid for his wedding clothes at the end of October 1789." (POUJOULAT, *Histoire de la Révolution*, p.163.)- "Devoured by needs" dissatisfied with the present, he moved towards an unknown future, making people assume everything about his talents, his ambition, his vices, the poor state of his fortune, and authorizing, by the cynicism of his words, all suspicions and all slanders." (THIERS, *Histoire de la Révolution française*, t. I, p. 135).

155 The history of Samson.

156 THIERS, *Histoire de la Révolution française*, p. 1?4.

until now, the Jews had been cursed by political law, just as they seemed to be cursed by religion"), Mirabeau's indignant voice cried out: "*Religion, our holy religion, curses no one; on the contrary, it blesses all men without distinction.*"[157]

157 *Moniteur*, December 1789.

V

THE CONSTITUTIONAL PRIEST GRÉGOIRE, THEIR MOST ZEALOUS SERVANT; HIS SMUGNESS AND SHORT-SIGHTED, DANGEROUS VIEWS ON THE JEWISH QUESTION: HIS EFFORTS TO HAVE EMANCIPATION DECREED ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S DAY.

If Mirabeau was the shining standard-bearer of the Israelite cause within the Assembly, the priest Grégoire was its zealous servant, its most active agent. Our readers are already familiar with this strange pastor, his success at the Metz contest (pages 28-30), and his fervor in having the National Assembly resolve the Jewish question from its very first sessions, and before any other issues (pages 97, 102). Let's complete his physiognomy, seen only from the tents of Israel.

A superficial eulogy presents this physiognomy as follows: "He was a man in whom two very different natures were harmoniously combined. As proud of his reason as a philosopher, as simple of heart as the humblest village shepherd, he had learned from reading secular authors to despise prejudice, and from reading the Gospel to love the poor."[158]

Without in any way detracting from the harmonious combination of qualities that came to him from nature, the Gospel and philosophy, we have no hesitation in saying that, underneath this happy combination, lay a deep-seated ambition, aroused by the laurels of Metz; and that his disobedience to the Church, stemming from ambition, made his undeniable talents dangerous.

The same eulogy adds: "This priest, so hard on earthly powers, who voted unhesitatingly for the death of Louis XVI, nevertheless devoted his life to defending the Jews and all the damned here below."[159]

Would that he had rejected the death vote with horror, and not undertaken the defense of the Jews, who were by no means the damned!

158 LOUIS BLANC, *Révolution française*, t. II, p. 353.
159 *Ibid*

It is one of the most painful aspects of history to see questions of the gravest interest to mankind spoiled by priests in revolt. Grégoire, a constitutional priest, spoiled the Jewish question by violating it, by forcing it. He is remembered for this trait that indicates a man who is light on procedure:

At the opening of the Estates General, mobile barriers were set up at the doors of the hall, assigning different entrances to the clergy, the nobility and the communes. Abbé Grégoire arrived; he cried out; then he quickly stepped over the barrier, to demonstrate that there should be no distinction between the three orders.

After Grégoire, the Jews will jump into society in the same way!

Shouldn't the parish priest of Emberménil, in a cause of such exceptional gravity, imitate the prudence of the Church which, in ordaining him a priest, had entrusted him with its own interests, and then, instead of posing as the noisy liberator of the Israelites, humbly side with the bishop members of the Assembly, who advised, along with kindness for this people, circumspection? What a painful contrast, on the rostrum of the Assembly, between the petulance of this undisciplined priest and the wise measure of Msgr de la Fare, his bishop in Nancy? The bishop said: "The Jews have grievances to redress. The legislator has forgotten that they are men and unhappy. They must be granted protection, security and freedom; but not active citizens... My book orders me to speak out against this motion."[160] Grégoire had other ideas than his bishop, and when he did, he said of himself, "*I am like granite; I can be broken, but not bent.*"[161]

A self-righteous mind, with an inconsiderate zeal, is almost always short-sighted. The parish priest of Emberménil is proof of this. To allay fears about granting full civil and political rights to the Hebrews, didn't he repeat over and over again: "We won't see Jews wearing the diadem, and by granting them a land of Gessen, we won't go looking for our Pharaohs among them."[162] Poor Grégoire!

160 *Moniteur*. December 23, 1789.

161 Carnot, *Mémoires de Gregoire*.

162 Gregoire provides this reassuring reason in his *Essai sur la régénération des juifs*, p. 130; he repeats it in his *Motion en faveur des juifs*, tabled at the *Assemblée nationale*, p. 17.

poor short-sightedness! Yet it was easy to foresee that the emancipated of the day before would become, the very next day, the kings of the age, Pharaohs of a new kind! But wouldn't the gold dust of the Hebrews have dazzled him? We're tempted to think so. We've compared him to the coach-fly (page 101); at the end of the climb, the good La Fontaine has his fly say:

Here, horsemen, pay me for my trouble.

The curé d'Emberménil certainly didn't go through the French Revolution empty-handed. From the Republicans, he accepted a bishopric; from Emperor Napoleon, the titles of Count, Senator, Commander of the Legion of Honor, with a considerable endowment of cash. The emancipation of the poor blacks of Saint-Domingue, of which he was the ardent promoter, is said to have brought him great benefits.[163] Would the emancipation of wealthy Israel alone have brought him nothing? Hardly. His biographers do not spare him in this respect.

But to come back to his misconceptions on the Jewish question, his impatient pride in its triumph was such that he, a priest, did not shrink from slander and betrayal: to rehabilitate the people of Calvary, he did not hesitate to denigrate the people of the Church. His writings on the Jews, his motions to the Assembly in their favor, are peppered with lines like these: "It was we who forced them to become vicious. The Jew was despised, he became despicable; in his place, perhaps we would have been worse! The crimes of the Jews, their misfortunes, bear witness to our conduct towards them. Nations, admit with a whimper that this is your doing. The Jews have produced the effects, you had set the causes: who are the most guilty?"[164] It was as if he were taking it upon himself to transport the thorns of Jesus' crown onto the heads of the Jews... It was this spirit of denigration that prompted him to actively lobby the National Assembly to have the emancipation decree adopted and promulgated

163 Bertrand de Molleville, in his *Histoire de la Révolution*, t. VIII, p. 380. speaks of a gratuity of 80,000 francs presented to him by the *Société des Amis des noirs*.

164 *Essai sur la régénération, des juifs*, pages 16, 43, 44, 71, etc., etc.

on the anniversary of St. Bartholomew's Day. He himself admits to his efforts. "*I would have liked the matter to have been discussed and decreed on Saint Bartholomew's Day, so that an act of justice and beneficence would mark the anniversary of a perpetually execrable crime.*"[165] Who can fail to see that such a project implied and concealed a gratuitous insult to the Church? For a Catholic priest who comes to ask for the emancipation of the Jews on the anniversary of St. Bartholomew's Day, first exposes the ignorant and simple to the belief that the Church feels the need for reparation, and wants to be forgiven for the massacre of the Protestants by the emancipation of the Israelites. Well, the Church has nothing to apologize for; it condemns Saint Bartholomew's as an execrable political attack. The National Assembly, many of whose members were still Christians, understood the terrible significance of such an act, and rejected Grégoire's plan.

Some have sought to excuse the boldness of the curé d'Emberménil by saying that he wanted to *Christianize the Revolution*. Alas, the opposite happened. The Revolution de-Christianized him. How many imprudent people shared his fate! The rest of his life, and his salt, were deplorable.[166]

The severity of judgment, which devotion to the Church and the defense of the Christian people have commanded from our pen, has not, however, banished gratitude from our hearts. Gregory loved the Israelites; supported or not by temporal rewards, his successes were often moved, convinced and sincere: "*May I,*" he said, "*alleviate the sufferings of an unfortunate nation, and provide it with a more eloquent defender; it will not find a more zealous one!*"[167] Gratitude brings a

165 *Motion en faveur des juifs*, preface, p. 10.

166 M. Guizot drew a harsh portrait of the "old Jacobin, who had waged war on honest people, property, liberty, the rights and rest of all." *Du Gouvernement de la France*, 1820, p. 232.

167 *Motion*, etc., p. 42. - 11 continued: "The breath of divine wrath has scattered the children of Jacob across the globe for a limited time, but He is directing events in accordance with His higher designs; and He undoubtedly reserves for us the glory of preparing, through our bounties, the revolution that is to regenerate this people. It will come, this happy day, and no doubt we are touching its dawn, a Ibid. p. 17.

poignant pang to the heart when we compare the fate of those who began our emancipation with that of those who completed it: Louis XVI and Malesherbes, Mirabeau and Grégoire! The first two dying as martyrs on a scaffold, the other two dying as one is not allowed to die: Mirabeau asked on his deathbed for music and flowers, and Grégoire refused to allow the Church, his mother, to recant.

Poor Mirabeau! Poor curé d'Emberménil! May what they did for Israel have softened God's justice for them!

VI

Abbé Maury: fighting emancipation as an athlete of the past.

Opposite these two zealous promoters of Israelite emancipation, in the ranks of the Constituent Assembly, stood two principal adversaries: Abbé Maury and Rewbell.

Abbé Maury - later Cardinal Maury - was the son of a humble shoemaker from Valréas (Vaucluse). Of a fiery nature, witty, highly educated, with a strong and abundant eloquence, he entered, as a deputy of the clergy, the Estates General of 1789. His crowning glory was to stand up almost alone to Mirabeau's thundering words. He declared himself the defender of the Church and royalty. This impartial judgment was passed on him:

"Abbé Maury, the Mirabeau of the right side, such a powerful improviser with an ever-classical language, shows a spectacle unheard of in history: it is that of a man of the people protecting all the past that the people want to destroy, defending the privileges and titles of the nobility despite the nobility itself, asking for more guarantees for the monarchy than the king dares to ask for, surrounding with his nervous arms the work of the centuries, which was falling piece by piece before him... A strange and glorious destiny that led to unworthy weaknesses. These revolutions, which Abbé Maury pursues with such eloquent audacity, will seem to seek revenge for his blows by stealing the line of duty from his eyes!"[168]

This man, who fights in the name of the past, who wraps his nervous arms around the work of the centuries as it falls piece by piece, takes the same attitude to the question of the Jews. As a priest, he wanted them to be respected; as a Frenchman, he was opposed to introducing them into the heart of France, by entrusting them with the management of public affairs.

His argument against them caused a sensation:

"I observe first of all that the word *Jew* is not the name of a sect, but of a *nation which has laws, which has always followed them,*

168 Poujoulat, *Histoire de la Révolution*, p. 155-6.

and which still wants to follow them. To call Jews citizens would be like saying that, without letters of naturality and without ceasing to be English or Danish, Englishmen and Danes could become French citizens... The Jews have lived through seventeen centuries without mixing with other peoples.

"They must not be persecuted; they are men, they are our brothers; and anathema to anyone who speaks of intolerance! You have recognized this, and since then you have assured the Jews of the most extensive protection. Let them therefore be protected as *individuals* and not as French citizens, since they cannot be *citizens*."[169]

The President of the Assembly at the time was the Comte de Clermont-Tonnerre, very favorable, too favorable, to the Israelites. Reasoning from the point of view of French unity, he criticized Abbé Maury for wanting, by excluding the Israelites, to constitute or preserve a separate nation within the French nation, which had already made so many sacrifices to the need for strong unity. "*There cannot,"* exclaimed the Count, *"be a nation within the nation!"*

— "It's a nation that has laws, that has always followed them, and that *still wants to follow them*," said Abbé Maury.

— "There can be no nation within a nation," replied the Comte de Clermont-Tonnerre;

The future lies in these words.

It's true that the new organization of nations doesn't exclude the Jews. But supposing the great storms that are brewing submerge the nations or dissolve them, the Hebrews, *who still have their laws*, will survive!

169 *Moniteur*, December 23, 1789.

VII

Rewbell. their most bitter adversary; Alsace supports him with its complaints and anger against the usurers. Louis XVI's last protection.

The most relentless fighter against Jewish emancipation was Rewbell. He never abandoned the breach for a moment.

He was harsh and hurtful, with a lively and harsh language. "Rewbell, a mediocre lawyer from Colmar, violent, lackluster at the Constituent Assembly, instigator of the violation of the secrecy of letters, distinguished himself by his animosity against Louis XVI. Finding himself in Mainz while the prince was on trial, he wrote to urge condemnation, expressing astonishment that *Louis Capet was still alive*."[170] From this we can infer whether he was soft on the Jews.

As deputy for Alsace, all the complaints of this unfortunate province, devoured by usurers, came to him. At the session of December 24, 1789, when the Count of Clermont-Tonnerre insisted on emancipation, the fiery deputy from Alsace exclaimed: "The decree which will elevate the Jews to the rank of citizens will be, have no doubt, their death warrant in Alsace, so much do the people hate them there, and so much do I fear that their fury will be aroused upon them!"[171]

It was following this session that Rewbell, attacked by Camille Desmoulins over the opinion he had defended in concert with Abbé Maury, wrote a letter to the witty pamphleteer, inviting him to go and see for himself, in Alsace, the true state of affairs. Your humanity," he said, "after a few hours' stay, would certainly lead you to employ all your talents in favor of the numerous, hard-working and brave class of my unfortunate compatriots, oppressed and repressed in the most atrocious manner *by the cruel horde of Africans* crammed into my country."[172]

The death warrant prophesied by Rewbell was executed in April

170 Poujoulat, *Histoire de la Révolution*, p. 497.— Dézobry, *Dictionnaire*, entry for Rewbell.

171 *Moniteur*, December 24, 1789.

172 Hallez, *Des juifs en France,* p. 171.

1790. When news reached Alsace that the Constituent Assembly was preparing to issue a decree favorable to the Jews, a deafening rumor spread everywhere. The barbaric scenes of the previous summer were about to be repeated (see p. 105 6 above). Fortunately, the Count of Clermont-Tonnerre, Abbé Grégoire, Mirabeau and Rœde- rer hastened to inform the Assembly of the dangers facing their clients. For the second time, the National Assembly placed their persons and property under the protection of the law. And as Louis XVI was still king, the generous monarch was quick to grant them his protection. A proclamation from the king appeared in Alsace;[173] and furthermore, by his order, M. de la Tour-du-Pin wrote in their favor to M. de Rochambeau, who was in command in that province.[174] The trembling Jews were protected, and Rewbell's sad prophecy was not fulfilled.

Rewbell is one of the last figures in history to show his relentlessness against the Israelites. He who was astonished that *Louis Capet was still alive* could well conceive the same astonishment about the remains of this indestructible people in its duration.[175]

173 Proclamation of the King:

"In view of the following decree:

"Decree of the National Assembly, April 16, 1790

"The National Assembly once again places the Jews of Alsace and the other provinces of the kingdom under the protection of the law, forbids all persons to attack their safety; orders the municipalities and national guards to protect their persons and property with all their power. "The King has sanctioned and sanctions the aforementioned decree, and consequently instructs and orders municipalities and national guards to comply with it, and to enforce and observe it.

"Done in Paris, on April 18, 1790 and of our reign the sixteenth.

Signed: LOUIS.

For the King:

Signed: DE SAINT-PRIEST

174 GRÉGOIRE, *Motion en faveur des juifs*, historical notice, p. 10.

175 Rewbell was the constant persecutor of the émigrés. His talent and obstinacy in his work earned him the presidency of the Directoire, but his brutal and sharp character made him unsuitable for foreign relations, which he believed he could handle. Under Bonaparte, he joined the Conseil des Anciens, disappeared from political life after the 18 brumaire, and died in the Haut-Rhin, with a reputation for avarice.

VIII

The Assembly's growing hesitation over the decree to be issued; it resumed and adjourned the question up to fourteen times.

For two years, Mirabeau, Grégoire, Maury and Rewbell were the focus of the Assembly's divergent views on the Jews, the animosities of some and the encouragement of others.

And what is the result of these debates?

Hesitation, ever-increasing hesitation, and, as a result, indefinite postponements of the question.

Overly favorable historians agree that the Jewish affair was postponed several times, but they add that "each time it was deferred by the urgency and multiplicity of other occupations."[176] This is not the truth. You don't postpone a case like this for two years just because you have other things to do. More impartial historians are frank about why the Assembly adjourned: because it had vague apprehensions. "Despite all urging, the question of the Jews *in its entirety* was not put on the agenda of the National Assembly until *very late,* as if the Assembly *were afraid of raising the issue*."[177] And again: "The Jewish question was becoming *increasingly burning*... but there were always *adjournments*... The Jewish representatives were *losing patience*."[178] Such an admission justifies well what we said at the beginning of this chapter, and which it is important to repeat: this assembly that nothing surprises, that nothing stops, enthusiastic to the point of presumption, feels ill at ease, indecisive, weak, before a sanction, a decree concerning the Jews. It would take her two years to draw up this decree; she would write it eleven times, granting something from time to time; it would have to be wrested from her, so to speak, piece by piece.

Here, moreover, is the picture of the Assembly's trial and error, postponements and successive partial concessions:

176 This is Grégoire's sentiment. (*Motion en faveur des juifs*, p. 10.)

177 Graetz, *Histoire des juifs*, t. XI, chap. v.

178 *Ibid*.

On December 24, 1789, the question was postponed for the first time.

On January 28, 1790, the civil rights formerly granted to the Jews of Bordeaux by Henri II and some of his successors were recognized and confirmed; but the matter was again adjourned for the Jews of Alsace.[179]

A month later, on February 26, 1790, the Duc de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt asked the Assembly to set a date for dealing with the civil status to be granted to the remaining Jews; he was told that this question was undoubtedly very important, but that there were others who were more important, and the adjournment was voted.[180]

Eighteen days later, on April 16, 1790, the Jews of Alsace, threatened by enraged populations, were placed, by a special decree, under the protection of the law and the National Assembly; but the examination of their final fate was again postponed.[181]

Fourteen days later, on April 30, 1790, their supporters in the Assembly returned to the fray with a decree granting citizenship rights to all those born outside the kingdom of foreign parents who had settled in France, provided they had been continuously domiciled there for five years. This project meets with no contradiction. But, as an amendment was requested to include Jews nominally, far from adopting this motion, the Assembly decreed: *that it did not intend to prejudge the question of the Jews, which had been and was being postponed*.[182]

Three months later, on July 20, 1790, at ten o'clock in the evening, when most of the Assembly's benches were empty, all the charges and levies demanded of the Jews were repealed, but there was still silence on their definitive fate.[183]

179 *Moniteur*, January 29, 1790. - Details of this session in *Recueil des lois concernant les Israélites* by Halphen, p. 195 199.

180 *Moniteur*, February 27, 1790.

181 *Moniteur*, April 17, 1790.

182 *Moniteur*, 1790, p. 1133ff.

183 *Moniteur*, July 22, 1790. — Rewbell, at the time of the vote, exclaimed: "The draft decree that has just been read presents a constitutional question that should not be put up for discussion at ten o'clock in the evening, and which without doubt is well worthy of a full assembly and a morning session."

Then a great year passed, fourteen months, without the Assembly, despite a skillful and pressing siege by the Jews, agreeing to take up the issue again. Indeed, during these fourteen months, five attempts were made, accompanied several times by ruse to surprise the Assembly, and they failed; here they are:

On August 25 and September 2, 1790, with regard to the judicial organization in which Protestants were admitted, the Assembly declared that it did not yet intend to prejudge the Jews.

On January 18, 1791, Grégoire, the ardent friend of Israel, was elected fortnightly president of the Assembly; quickly, this was taken advantage of; the Jewish question was introduced, but immediately adjourned by a large majority.[184]

On May 7, 1791, the Assembly heard a report by Talleyrand on religious buildings; the Jews seized on it to raise the question of their civil status: the Assembly did not respond to their request.[185]

On May 20, 1791, the Assembly passed a law governing the liquidation of Jewish communities, which had been suppressed like all other communities in France. As this law was of the utmost importance, and as very serious interests were involved, it was expected that the question of civil status would also be discussed. But the Assembly did not abandon its reserve, and passed the law on the method of liquidating the debts of Jewish communities, without addressing the issue of Jewish emancipation.[186]

Such is the picture of the Constituent Assembly's hesitations and postponements. And so, in less than two years, from December 24, 1789 to September 27, 1791, eleven official presentations of the question were made, veritable assaults, not counting individual attempts. If we add to this the three official attempts at introduction made by Curé Grégoire, from August 3, 1789 to December 24 of the same year, we arrive at a total of 14 requests to the Assembly for a decision on

184 *Moniteur* of January 20, 1791.

185 See details in *Recueil des lois concernant les Israélites* by Halphen, p. 224-6.

186 *Moniteur* of May 20, 1791.

emancipation, 14 categorical refusals on its part, and 14 defeats for the Jews. Doesn't it seem that we can see a pack panting, sniffing, coming and going to enter the square? This is the comparison used by one of the prophets: *They will return towards evening, they will stir up an uproar like dogs, and they will circle the city*.[187] Let it be said that the Constituent Assembly lent itself "to their emancipation, and surpassed Louis XVI in kindness!

187 Psalm 58.

IX

Reasons for this hesitation: not at all religious. What must have been going on in the hearts of many deputies. Their official silence in the face of this painful contrast: the voted exit of Christ, the imminent entry of the Jews.

It's time to ask ourselves: What was the source of the Assembly's hesitation? And were they, in part, inspired by a religious motive?

All the research we have carried out, and our in-depth study of the Constituent Assembly, allow us to answer: these hesitations arose from two motives: one provided by the Jews in their request, the other by the people of Alsace; but in no way from a religious motive.

For the Jews, the question, when they put it to the Assembly, was badly presented, or at least very incomplete. The object of their request was ill-defined; there had been no prior agreement between them. Undoubtedly, they demanded civil rights; but many aspired to keep their privileges, their old customs: which was equivalent to transporting or keeping Judea in France, while enjoying France. This was the reproach leveled at the Jews of Alsace by the Jews of Bordeaux. "We don't yet know exactly what the demands of the Jews of Alsace are. But, judging by the public papers, they should seem *quite extraordinary,* since these Jews aspire to live in France under a special regime."[188] In addition, some (the Jews of Alsace, Metz and Lorraine) requested, in their petitions to the Assembly, that the rabbis continue to fulfill the functions of judges within the Jewish communities.[189] The others (the Jews of Paris) gladly gave them the day off.[190] It was only very late, under the impact of repeated ad-

188 *Adresse des juifs de Bordeaux à l'Assemblée nationale.*

189 "Speaking of their rabbis, they detail the functions they wish to preserve: the right to judge divorces, affix seals, draw up inventories, appoint guardians and curators, etc. (*Requête des juifs d'Alsace et Lorraine*).

190 "The Jews established in Paris have come closer to us in their printed petitions. They testify that. wanting to compete in patriotism with all Frenchmen, they renounce the right to have leaders drawn from their bosom." (Grégoire, *Motion sur les juifs,* p. 8-9.)

journments, that the Jews felt the need to unify their demands.[191] But given the obscurity of the issue and the divergence of demands, it's hardly surprising that the Assembly hesitated at first, was then very happy to find a pretext for its hesitations, and eagerly agreed, from the very first session, to the remark by deputy Baumetz: "that the question relating to the Jews was barely known, that it nevertheless deserved the strictest and most scrupulous examination. ... that it was necessary to give these people time to examine their interests... that it was finally necessary to know precisely under what conditions they intended to submit themselves in order to attain the rank of French citizens."[192]

The other reason for the Assembly's hesitations and postponements was the growing irritation of the people of Alsace. The National Assembly had already been painfully impressed by the account given in the gallery of the enormous usury of the Jews in this unfortunate country, the legal figure of their mortgages on the land, which amounted to 12 million, and the hatred harbored against them by the population. But when reliable and cautious information informed it that the population was trembling with rage at the thought of these usurers becoming their fellow citizens, the Assembly became concerned. Faced with a state of affairs that threatened to provoke insurrection against the government in Alsace, as well as persecution of the Jews, it hesitated, and in spite of the pressing and powerful representations of those concerned, it temporized, finding ways to delay until the end; but at the last hour, inflexible logic, as we shall soon say, imposed emancipation.

191 Here is the letter of unification addressed by the Jews of Paris, Alsace and Lorraine to the President of the National Assembly.

Dear Mr. President

"We are informed that an address from the Jews of Bordeaux has just been presented to the National Assembly... Our main demands are the same as theirs: with the exception that what they ask to keep, we ask to conquer. Our cause is absolutely identical to theirs. We therefore believe that the National Assembly will not judge one without the other, because it does not seem to us that it can have grounds for separating them..." *Pétition des juifs à l" Assemblée nationale*. January 28, 1791, preface.

192 *Moniteur*, December 24 and 25, 1789.

These are the causes of the Assembly's hesitations and slowness. And yet, is it really true that religion played no part in these delays? And didn't the memory of Jesus Christ have any influence on the hesitations?

Alas, no.

In particular, in individual consciences, we must have thought of him, and even wished that those who were heirs to the crime of Calvary would not become citizens in a Christian nation: we believe this, we are convinced of it. But these thoughts were not, and could not, be expressed in official decisions. Just think of the Constituent Assembly:

It comprised twelve hundred deputies drawn from the three orders of the nation: the clergy, the nobility and the Third Estate. Consequently, among the members of the Assembly, a certain number represented the Catholic religion; a large number, equally, in the ranks of the nobility and the Third Estate, were upright, honest, devoted to order; many, in fact, died on the scaffold. So there can be no doubt that, in their innermost being, all these deputies must have been thinking of Jesus Christ, experiencing sadness and perplexity, and hesitating for a long time before pronouncing the social rehabilitation of the sons of Calvary's deicides;

So much for the inner voice.

But no one, not even the priests, not even the bishops, dared to make an official statement of these sentiments, i.e. to consider Jesus Christ from the rostrum, and we mustn't reproach them for it, for it was no longer in anyone's power to attempt it.[193] Why? because

193 One priest, however, tried it out. Here is the official record of that session, where Talleyrand, in his report on the organization of worship, betrayed the Church:

National Assembly

Session of May 7, 1791

M. Couturier, *former parish priest of Salives*. - I would first like to make an observation on the inconsistency of the rapporteur, who, attached by his state to the sanctuary, has made a report contrary to the duties of his state. (There is some murmuring; it is requested that the discussion be closed).

M. Talleyrand, *former bishop of Autun*. - On behalf of the Constitution Committee, I ask that the witness be heard.

the essence of the Constituent Assembly, its program, its goal, was the *rights of man*. A formidable original sin that was to paralyze and taint everything, and consequently paralyze every Christian argument in the gallery! The *rights of Christ* had been out of the question since the Declaration of the Rights of Man was voted and adopted at the

M. COUTURIER. - The moment has arrived! In the end, we boldly lift the mask. It is now, in formal terms, that we propose to establish the *abomination of desolation* in the Holy Place... (On rjt.) A soldier speaks of the military ordinance, a jurisconsult quotes the code and digest, Barthole and Cujas; I quote my Law, which is also yours. It is therefore proposed, to use the language of Scripture, that you establish the *abomination of desolation in the Holy Place*. (There is laughter and murmuring.) It is proposed by a formal decree to establish any kind of worship in our churches, to convert them into mosques, synagogues, Lutheran temples, Anabaptist temples, pagodas; to order that the temple of the true God be converted into a temple of Baal. (Some murmur.) If, two years ago, someone had dared to propose converting churches into mosques, into pagodas, you would have rejected him with in lignation. (Several voices: No, no.) The rapporteur asked that the Directoire decree be declared worthy of praise, and that it be sent to the eighty-two départements to serve as a model. Is this the way to respect our holy religion? Is this how you keep your hands off our religion? Is this how our religion is raised so high? It was elevated when the Pantheon was consecrated to the true God, the God of our fathers. Today, we propose to consecrate the temple of the true God to error, to idolatry; if I were the enemy of the Constitution, if I wanted to be Machiavellian, I would say to you: *Impiété mensuram*. Do you not fear that the people, finding neither tranquility nor meditation in the temple, seeing these churches where they went to fulfill their religious duties become the temple of idols, seeing these pulpits of truth changed into pulpits of pestilence... (Laughter.)

I'm quite surprised that, in an assembly where there is so much light, I'm troubled when I use Scripture's own words. I quote what Our Lord says, following the expressions I have just recalled: When you drink: the abomination of desolation (They laugh: they murmur; they murmur).

laughter; murmuring; laughter), flee, flee but. Gentlemen, the decree

is not yet carried, I can say: Flee: flee these lands once so Christian, where the true God was worshiped, where the god of Baal is now worshiped: flee, flee: cross the mountains so as not to witness the desecration of temples and the overthrow of altars!... I conclude: 1. that the Assembly reject the proposed articles; 2. that Messrs. of the Paris Departmental Directory be summoned to the bar; 3. that the Constitution Committee be called to order and censured; it is the Assembly's honor to grant my request.

end of August 1789. The *Social Contract* had replaced the Gospel as the basis of society. If any deputy had attempted to fight Jewish emancipation in the name of Christ's rights, he would have been stopped in his tracks.

A strange and painful spectacle, however! While, by virtue of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, Jesus Christ had been effectively expelled from French legislation, exposed, as in the past, to not knowing where to lay his head, we were preparing, on the other hand, to welcome the Jews, and give them the right of citizenship that had been taken away from the Man-God. The Jews, as men, were taking precedence over the God-Man. But there was hesitation. We sensed that there was a terrible contrast here that we didn't quite realize. Right up to the last night of its existence, the Constituent Assembly would have preferred not to decide the question. It adjourned three times, six times, eleven times, and the last time indefinitely; the discontents and rumors of Alsace were a relief, a happy pretext. But in the end, postponements, slowness and hesitation had to give way to the inflexible logic of one principle: O Jesus Christ (forgive the reflection), by virtue of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, you must leave, and the Jews must enter!...

Chapter VI
Means employed by the Israelites to overcome the hesitations of the Assembly (1789-1790)

I
The Jews of Paris set out to make the National Assembly capitulate. Their neighborhood in 1789; their numbers; their leaders: Cerfberr and Berr-Isaac-Berr.

To anyone familiar with the restless, inventive character of the Israelite race, we are sure to cause no surprise if we say that, faced with the hesitations and slowness of the Constituent Assembly, the sons of Israel did not stand idly by. They reminded us of what natural history tells of the beavers who, gathered in troops along the waters, make dams and build dwellings for themselves: They, too, have dreamed of a dam that would enable them to move from the back alleys of the Middle Ages into the interior of modern society, and build new, more spacious dwellings; but the National Assembly seems in no way inclined to encourage and welcome them; industrious rodents, how will they go about achieving their ends, and one day possessing sumptuous dwellings?

At the time these things were being planned, towards the end of the last century, there were scarcely more than 500 Jews in Paris. Today, the capital is teeming with them.

These 500 Jews preferred to live in the Carmelite district. They had a small synagogue in the narrow rue *Brisemiche*.[194] In immediate and daily contact with the proponents of modern ideas, this Parisian Jewish colony was more advanced and decisive than the rest of France's Israelites. Proof of this is the fact that, in order to acquire civil rights, it did not hesitate to throw its particular syndics and rabbis into the sea — it would be more accurate to say the Seine.[195]

194 *Archives Israélites*, year 1841, p. 504.

195 Request from the Jews of Paris to the National Assembly, quoted by

Like the beavers with their saw-toothed teeth, flattened tail and nimble fingers, this small, interesting and fertile troop was responsible for gnawing away obstacles and building the dike over which all the tribes of Israel would one day pass.

His leaders, however, were not from Paris. They came from Alsace and Lorraine. The two principal ones were Cerf-Berr and Berr-Isaac-Berr.

The name Ber (which, in German, means bear) is as famous in the chronicles of the Israelites of France as that of O'Connell in the mountains of Ireland. Cerf-Berr helped to emancipate his co-religionists, particularly through his wealth; Berr-Isaac-Berr, particularly through his speeches: both, through their tireless efforts.

Cerfberr is the wealthy Alsatian Israelite we've already told you about. A former general manager of fodder in northern France, he had rendered signal services to Louis XVI, who in return had granted him the rights of a royal subject, and permission to own land and houses throughout the kingdom. Strasbourg, as we have seen, protested against this munificence, and bravely threw out the Jew, the king's protégé. At this point in our story, Cerfberr, who had moved to Paris, became the driving force behind an agreement between the *Société des Amis de la Constitution* in Strasbourg and the *Société des Amis de la Constitution* in Paris. A report or memorandum from the Alsatian Friends in favor of the Jews reached the Friends in the capital; among other arguments, it stated: "I buy grain at the market; I don't care whether the field that produced it was plowed by an Anabaptist, a Catholic or a Lutheran: I wouldn't care if it had been ploughed by a Jew; but what I do care about is that there is plenty of grain on the market, and that it sells at a moderate price. I don't care whether this field that produces my food belongs to Saint Benedict, Saint Bernard, Saint Bruno, or some descendant of the patriarch Jacob; what no one should care about is that all fields are cultivated and well cultivated."[196] It's easy to recognize

Grégoire in his *Motion*, p. 8-9.

196 Report read to the assembly of the *Société des Amis de la Constitution*, February 27, 1790, on the question of the civil status of the Jews of Alsace, p. 20 — Extract from the minutes of this session:

the inspiration of the Director General of Forages in this language. But he was mistaken, the memoir was mistaken, as were all the liberals of the Constituent, when they persuaded themselves that it was absolutely indifferent whether a sheaf of wheat was cultivated and harvested by a Catholic, a Lutheran or a Jew, as long as it was full and well-pressed. Matter depends on spirit. Every creature is, of itself, indifferent; but the idea infused into it makes it a source of life or a volcano of death. A sheaf of wheat presented as a gift to a beggar by the prior of a monastery or by the venerable of a Masonic lodge indicates two opposite goals. In the same way, whether collected from a Jewish or Lutheran field, over which no blessing has passed, or from a Christian field which has been blessed, it will not be indifferent. The liberals, alas! did not enter into these mystical distinctions. Cerfberr, a stranger to Christian doctrine, didn't even suspect them. There was only one thing on his mind: to give his co-religionists a share in the freedom to acquire the fields and houses he himself owned, by virtue of Louis XVI's letters patent. Freedom was, in his eyes, the beautiful and gentle Queen Esther; new Mordecai, he said to his rays: Not for me alone, but for all our brothers!

Berr-Isaac-Berr, the other leader, was a native of Nancy. He made his name by translating from Hebrew into French the funeral prayers composed by his teacher, the Rabbi of Lorraine, on the death of Louis XV. He always maintained good relations with the monarchy; under the Restoration, he obtained a pension from Louis XVIII and Charles X.[197] Berr-Isaac- Berr "was an eminent, enlightened and religious mind. Combining austerity of morals, severity of principles, firmness of convictions, with kindness of heart and gentle

"The society, having heard the reading of the report, decided to adopt it in its entirety, and to send it in its name to the *Société des Amis de la Constitution* in Paris, as the expression of its feelings and opinion on this matter, and to 'request that it be placed before the eyes of the National Assembly."

Signed : BARBIER DE TINAN, *president*.

.GENTHOU, LEVRAULT, *secretaries*.

197 Berr-Isaac-Berr is also known as *Berr de Turique*, because of a piece of land of that name he lived on near Nancy. A royal decree under the Restoration allowed him to add the name *Turique* to his own.

religion, he lived at the head of his large family like a rabbi, like a patriarch."[198] Chosen by his co-religionists in Lorraine to plead their cause before the National Assembly, he was truly, along with Cerfberr, the pioneer of emancipation. Mgr de la Fare, bishop of Nancy and deputy of Lorraine, having reported to the tribune these frightened words of one of his diocesans: "*Yes, Monseigneur, if we were to lose you, we would see a Jew become our bishop, so skilled are they at seizing everything*;"[199] Berr-Isaac-Berr wrote to the noble prelate "that Jacob's children, long unhappy, were not aiming for his crozier, but only for a free, peaceful and respected roof, on French soil! "

Berr-Isaac-Berr was 46 when he stood up for his brothers' cause before the National Assembly; Cerfberr was 63.[200]

Under the leadership of these two leaders, the Jews of Paris laid siege to the Assembly, forcing it to capitulate.

198 Carmoly, *la France Israélite*, p. 59.

199 *Moniteur*, December 23, 1789.

200 Cerfberr died in 1793, aged 66. Berr-Isaac-Berr died in 1828, aged 81.

II

MEANS THEY USED TO FORCE THE ASSEMBLY TO BE FAVORABLE TO THEM. FIRST MEANS: SUPPLICATION. A CHARM ON SEVERAL PRESIDENTS OF THE ASSEMBLY.

They used all the means that such an undertaking and the genius of the Israelite race could suggest. The word "means" is understood as: *that which is used to achieve an end*. With the dear Hebrews, this meaning is too easily lost and replaced by another, which also belongs to them and which imply: *wealth, pecuniary faculties*. Israel's means, as pecuniary faculties, are considerable; everyone knows this. And because gold can be perverted, the other means used to bend the Constituent Assembly have lost their fairness in their alliance with this metal.

But let's not get ahead of ourselves.

The first means was *supplication*. They begged, even in that obsequious, fearful tone befitting long-suffering and despised beings. In most of their petitions to the deputies of the National Assembly, these poor people eagerly used the language of the time, calling out to the deputies: *Our lords*, "Our lords, could the hopes we had been led to conceive, and which your decrees themselves had given us, now fade away?... Our Lords, we entrust ourselves to all of you."[201]

We have not come across any documents establishing that these supplications were very persuasive. With the exception of the session of October 14, 1789, when the representatives of the Jewish communities of Alsace and Lorraine were introduced for the first time at the bar of the Assembly, and Berr-Isaac-Berr pronounced, with tears in his eyes, some truly touching words (see above, pages 118-19), the pleas of the Jews found the Assembly stiff and on guard! Their bent backs, pale faces and moaning voices did little to arouse their compassion. And yet we had entered the era of romance, of tender, generous feelings! The Jews said: "*The hardest oak, a triple*

201 *Nouvelle Adresse des Juifs à l'Assemblée nationale*, December 24, 1789 (printed by Frault, quai des Augustins).

brass must surround the heart"[202] of this Assembly!

And the deputies of the Assembly thought among themselves: "*This floured block tells us nothing worthwhile!*"[203]

There was one exception, however. Some of the presidents were extremely tender-hearted, perhaps too much so! At the time of the Constituent Assembly, the chair of the presidency was renewed every month. Now, when the chair is occupied by a friend of Israel, the pleas become more urgent, and an attempt is made. We'll refrain from naming names, but there's no harm in naming Abbé Grégoire. He happened to hold the chair in January 1791, and immediately the Jewish question erupted; but he drew this green lesson from the Duc de Broglie: "It is with surprise that I hear renewed in this tribune a proposal relating to an object which you, Gentlemen, have *so wisely postponed* for several months. I am no less astonished that a member of the ecclesiastical committee has *taken the liberty of interfering with the stated agenda*, in order to make a proposal that is as *dangerous* in itself as it is inappropriate in the circumstances..."[204] In short, a real charm from Israel sometimes hovered over the presidency. What was this charm made of? A clever chemist would be the one to tell us! All literate people had read Rousseau, and, in all likelihood, at the presidency of the Assembly, this reflection of the philosopher from Geneva must not have been unknown: "I made myself a *golden century* to my fancy, and, filling these beautiful days with all the scenes of my life that had left me with sweet memories, and with all those that my heart still desired, I tenderized myself to tears over the true pleasures of humanity." Hypocritical Rousseau! Naive presidents! The golden age you dream of with such sentimental philosophy for yourselves and for humanity is not far off: the Jewish people, emancipated by you, will take charge of bringing it about, but in their own way, and to their own profit.

202 Horace, *Odes*: Virgil.

203 La Fontaine.

204 Session of January 18, 1791 (*Moniteur*, January 20, 1791).

III

SECOND MEANS: THE INFLUENCE OF GOLD.

So, with supplication on their lips, the second means the Jews used to arouse interest in their cause was gold in their hands.

No one will ever believe that gold, which has always been the great power of this people since its dispersion, did not serve them in this instance, and that the purse, which had so often provided them with the means to resolve the most delicate difficulties, was, this time, disdained by them, so ideal would their cause have seemed, and so disinterested would their views have been! This, however, is the strange assertion made by the historian Graetz. "Enemies of the Jews," he says, "had spread the rumor that a very wealthy Jew (Cerfberr) had distributed very considerable sums of money to win lawyers. *This was a terrible slander. Is it possible to suborn a city of seven hundred thousand inhabitants in this way?*"[205] Too innocent an assertion, and too biased a justification! No, no doubt, you can't suborn a town of seven hundred thousand inhabitants; but in a town of seven hundred thousand inhabitants, you can suborn this or that inhabitant, this or that lawyer, this or that deputy. This is what our good Hebrews did not disdain. We firmly believe this, without in the least detracting from their qualities. Yes, it's our feeling, they had to spend and distribute a lot of gold. The Duc de Broglie, moreover, declared as much in the middle of Parliament. "*Among them*," he said during the session of January 18, 1791, "*there is one in particular who has acquired an immense fortune at the expense of the State, and who is spreading considerable wealth in the city of Paris to win defenders for his cause.*"[206] He was referring to Cerfberr. To accuse Cerfberr of having made his fortune at the expense of the State, when Louis XVI himself had acknowledged, in magnificent letters patent, the great services Cerfberr had rendered to the State, was an unfair accusation, unworthy of the noble duke. But whether the Duc de Broglie was mistaken in asserting "that Cerfberr was spreading sums of money all over Paris to win supporters for his cause," no, surely not!

205 GRAETZ, *Histoire des juifs*, t. XI, p. 211.

206 *Moniteur*, January 20, 1791.

The hands that held out the gold are not worthy of praise; those that accepted it even less so. That the Jews resorted to such a means of persuasion was to be expected. But that, on the other hand, their emancipation was encouraged by being won over to their cause with money was a characteristic sign of the proud and, at the same time, unproud era ushered in by the Revolution. The grave Malesherbes, presiding over the section of the Council of State charged by Louis XVI with examining the cause of the Jews, would never have allowed the golden calf to cast its shadow in the Council chamber. The same cannot be said of certain members, even certain presidents, of the Constituent Assembly. Society, alas! was beginning to present that venal aspect that inevitably comes from materialistic doctrines and Voltairian mores, and which will later completely assimilate it to the Jews. Like attracts like! That's why the doors of society were no longer solidly closed to the Jews. They were no longer the heavy doors of the Middle Ages, locked with honor. The golden key already played with ease. "O venal city!" cried a foreigner at the sight of degenerate Rome, "all you need is a buyer! With their finesse of penetration, the Jews had sensed that society had become venal, and they themselves were presenting themselves as buyers!

IV

THIRD MEANS: LOGIC; THE JEWS APPEAL TO HUMAN RIGHTS. IMPLACABLE ARROGANCE OF THEIR PETITIONS. EMBARRASSMENT FOR THE LEGISLATORS OF '89.

By employing supplications and gold, the Jews laid siege to society by means that were, in a way, familiar and that belonged to them. Now, however, society has unwisely offered them a means of entering its midst without a blow: the Declaration of the Rights of Man!

Many light-hearted and irreligious Frenchmen - all the more light-hearted for having become irreligious - never realized the tremendous breach that the Declaration of the Rights of Man had made in Christian society. Let them realize this once and for all, by reading the following:

From the moment that the legislators of '89 removed the *Gospel* of Jesus Christ from the foundation of society, and substituted Rousseau's *Social Contract*, and from the moment that, to be a citizen of a nation such as France, all that was required in future was to be a *man*, without any further concern for the title of Christian, it followed: that Jews had the right to present themselves, to become citizens; for they too were men! They soon understood this, and soon presented themselves. The reader will certainly be grateful to us for placing before his eyes two striking pictures, borrowed from the historian who has rediscovered the local color of the Revolution; we will add a Jewish color to them:

"A new ferment has entered the ignorant and coarse mass, and the *new ideas* are having their effect. They have long since filtered insensitively from layer to layer, and after having won over the aristocracy, the entire literate part of the Third Estate, the lawyers, the schools, the entire youth, they have insinuated themselves, drop by drop and through a thousand cracks, into the class that lives by the work of its arms. *The great lords, in their toilette, mocked Christianity and asserted the rights of man in front of their valets, their wigmakers, their suppliers and their entire antechamber.* People of letters, lawyers and prosecutors repeated the same diatribes and theories in a more

bitter tone in cafés, restaurants, promenades and all public places. They spoke in front of the common people as if they weren't there, and all this eloquence poured out without care, splashed into the brains of the craftsman, the cabaret owner, the commissionaire, the reseller..."[207] We add: and the Jew. Indeed, the Jews, too, in selling their rags and making their trades, retained and brought back to the back alleys of their separate quarters what they heard about human rights. Is it any wonder, then, that they straightened their humiliated brows, since in the eyes of the new legislation, the stain of deicide no longer counts, and said: We too are men, and as men, we demand to share in the rights of all! Were they wrong? Let us reply. As soon as the representatives of a Christian nation abandoned the heights created by Christianity to descend and place themselves on the terrain of *pure humanity*, why, on this terrain, would the Jews not have hastened to run, raising their heads? They did. In this danger of their appearance, who are the culprits?

Another picture of the time:

We know the famous Festival of the Federation, celebrated on July 14, 1790, and which was, in a way, the idyll of the *Social Contract*. At the Champ de Mars, the scene of the festivities, where more than three hundred thousand patriots gathered, the moment the cannon announced the oath of loyalty, every arm was raised, every voice shouted: *I swear it*. Before and after the oath, it was like a delirium, of which here are a few details that form a picture. In Paris," writes an eyewitness, "I saw knights of St. Louis and chaplains dancing in the street with individuals from their department. At the Champ de Mars, on the day of the federation, despite the pouring rain, the first to arrive began to dance; those who followed joined them and formed a round which soon embraced part of the Champ de Mars... Three hundred thousand spectators beat time with their hands. - The following days, on the Champ de Mars and in the streets, people danced, drank and sang; there was a ball and refreshments at the wheat market, and a ball on the site of the Bastille. - In Tours, where fifty-two detachments from neighboring provinces had gathered, at around four o'clock in the evening, in an irresistible burst of wild

207 TAINE, *la Révolution*, t. I, p. 34 -5.

gaiety, officers, junior officers and soldiers began to run through the streets, forming dances and shouting: Long live the king! Long live the nation! throwing their hats in the air, and forcing everyone they met to dance. A canon of the cathedral, who was passing by quietly, is dressed in a grenadier's cap, and dragged along in the round: after him, two clerics; they are hugged a lot, then let go... Every scene ends with a ball. It's the universal finale..."[208]

Well, now, let the reader imagine Jews appearing in the shadows, around these dances. Though still shy and grimy, they're tempted to join in. How could they not? Dances, rounds in honor of human rights and universal brotherhood, but it's the *dance of the resurrected*! The Middle Ages had their dance of the dead; here, it's the dance of the living and the resurrected. So they could boldly introduce themselves and say: "We're men too, let's expand the circle!

Philosophers of the *Social Contract*, deputies of the Constituent Assembly of 1789, it was you who, with your *Declaration of the Rights of Man*, created the breach that will give way to the Jews. And you're surprised that Jews flock to your sessions to be recognized as men and accepted as citizens! It would have been simpler for them to abstain and not insist. You've opened the door, knocked it down, and they want to come in! You've knocked down the walls of Christian society, and they, with their alert feet, are already in your ranks!

It's also curious to note how, in the petitions they address to the National Assembly, alongside the pleas, there are also the boldnesses suggested by the new law. "Our lords, we entrust ourselves to all of you; and your known respect for the rights of man, the *impossibility* in which you now find *yourselves of contradicting* all those acts of wisdom and justice which have emanated from you, the pain you would feel at *dishonoring*, by a striking injustice, a constitution which must be the happiness of France and the object of the admiration of foreigners : everything guarantees us that our cause, which yesterday found so many adversaries among you, will find in all of you, today, as many supporters and defenders."[209] What could we say to

208 Eyewitness accounts, quoted by Taine (*la Révolution*. p. 289-90).

209 *Nouvelle Adresse des juifs à l'Assemblés nationale*, of December 24, 1789,

the logic of these observations? Nothing. -

The interested parties still say to the legislators: "If you refuse us, your refusal will seem like a solemn approval of popular hatred against the Jews. People will compare the *Declaration of the Rights of Man*, so often read and reread by them, with the unfortunate destiny of the Jews, and conclude that *they are not men*... You would push back into the depths of hearts the prejudice that is ready to escape... And the fury of the people, which has so often broken out against the Jews, would be even easier to ignite."[210]

History has recorded no response to these arguments. The Assembly's embarrassment was obvious.

The legislators of '89 had thoughtlessly overturned the old order of things in the name of human rights, and now an unexpected invasion — not of barbarians, as in the fourth century, but of the accursed, a race despised by all — had unexpectedly appeared to benefit immediately from the new legislation. This unexpected appearance was bound to stun the Assembly. It would have liked not to extend the recognition of man and his rights to these foreigners, but the Jews shouted at it: "It would be to put you in contradiction with the Constitution... it would be to dishonor yourselves!... It would expose us to a persecution more appalling than all the previous ones... We are men!..." And the legislators were mute with embarrassment and fear.

For a long time, society had pushed the Wandering Jew from its bosom, saying to him: *Walk, walk*! But now that society had ceased to be Christian, and the new legislators were reluctant to recognize the consequences of human rights for the Jews, the latter turned the famous and fatal word against the Assembly and, in their turn, shouted: March, march!

p. 3.

210 *Petition des juifs à l'Assemblée nuionale* of January 28, 1790, p.78-9, p. 94. - This petition opens with the arrogant statement:

"They ask to be citizens. The right they have to be declared as such, the advantage that will result for France, the inconveniences that would result from a decree opposed to their wishes, all this is set out in this writing with the energy befitting men who demand not a pardon, but an act of justice" (p. 7-8).

V

FOURTH WAY: THE SUBURBS AND THE COMMUNE. THE YOUNG LAWYER GODARD (1791). HE'S NICKNAMED THE JEW'S LAWYER. HIS WALLET IN OUR HANDS.

Finally, they employed a last means, this one covert and roundabout, reprehensible in every way: recourse to the *suburbs and the Commune.* "The representatives of the Jews were losing patience", says one of their historians.[211] The pain of waiting does not excuse the use of oblique means. Their petition (January 28, 1790) to the National Assembly contained this audacious program: "Everything that we would not have dared, or would have dared only with infinite precautions, in a more remote era, we can and must dare in this moment of universal regeneration, when all ideas and sentiments are taking a new direction; and *we must hasten to dare*."[212] They themselves put this leadership advice into practice only too well.

Here we are in possession of the last secret of how Jewish emancipation came about. Malesherbes and Louis XVI were the beginnings; the *suburbs* and the Commune were the end. So, given this historical truth: that it was indeed the Commune that the Jews turned to for the supreme impetus, the categorical help that brought their emancipation to fruition, it is important, before recounting the events, to add a line to the picture we drew of the Constituent Assembly, when we described its local coloring at the beginning of chapter IV.

We described it as follows: An enthusiastic and generous assembly, but ideological, theatrical, full of presumption and self-importance. We reserved this last feature for this place: an assembly entirely subject to the action of the suburbs and the Paris Commune.

This historical fact is too well known today to require many quotations. Just one will suffice: "Outside the National Assembly, there are real powers: the Hôtel de Ville, the districts and the clubs. It was there that street agitation, threats and plots were prepared...

211 GRAETZ, t. XI.

212 P*étition des jnifs adressée à l" Assemblée nationale* January 28, 1790, p. 96.

The clubs had a means of action called the *Sabbath*; it was an association of ten devoted men, taking the order of the day, which each of them then gave to ten men belonging to the various battalions of the Paris National Guard; all the battalions and all the sections received at once the same riot proposal, the same demonstration against the constituted authorities."[213]

Oppression of the National Assembly by the Commune and the districts was the hallmark of the Revolution. At odds with its sovereign, this presumptuous Assembly was obliged to grant below what it refused above: obedience. Laws were decreed in the Assembly, but received, pre-adorned, from the Hôtel de Ville and the clubs.

Well, the Israelites were obviously too perceptive and devious not to take advantage of this confusion of powers. Always adjourned and dismissed by the Assembly, they turned to the Hôtel de Ville, to the Commune, and concerted with the occult force to force the legal and legislative force to take care of them and be favorable to them.

One of their most complete historians did not think it necessary to conceal this maneuver. Tired," he says, "by the thousand useless efforts they had made to obtain civil rights, they devised *one last means*. Seeing that it was impossible to obtain, through reason and common sense, what they called their rights, they resolved to *force the National Assembly to prove their emancipation*... They knew only too well that power was no longer in the hands of the Assembly, but in those of the various parties in the capital, who, in their revolutionary zeal, dominated everything - the king, the Assembly, the whole country! The Jews of Paris, Alsace and Lorraine turned to them."[214]

Could the admission be more formal?

But, for a page as serious as the one we are writing, Providence has been careful to provide us with irrefragable information and testimony.

There is one man who has remained virtually unknown to history, and who, however, just when the cause of emancipation seemed to be at a standstill for an indefinite time, rushed in, decided everything

213 *Mémoires de la Fayette*, t. II. — *Histoire de la Révolution*. by Poujoulat, p. 157-9.

214 Graetz, t. XI, p. 211.

and took everything away: the attorney Godard. In Paris in 1791, he was known as "*the young lawyer of the Jews*."

Now, Providence has allowed his portfolio concerning the Jews, his papers as a lawyer devoted to their cause, to fall into our hands. Twenty-five years ago, in Marseilles, we made this discovery, which is truly precious, since it enables us to reveal, with the help of authentic and indisputable documents,[215] the last phase of Jewish emancipation: its Jacobin phase.

215 Many of these documents bear the stamp of the Hôtel de Ville or the Municipality of Paris, with the autograph signatures of well-known figures. The portfolio also contains the minutes or drafts of all Godard's speeches in favor of the Jews, along with a good number of letters addressed to him, unpublished and not found elsewhere.

Chapter VII
The Jacobin phase of the Jewish question. The Jews of Paris turn to the commune and overcome resistance from the assembly (1790–1791)

I
Cerfberr and the lawyer Godard. The Jacobin phase of the Jewish question.

Here's the chapter against the Jews! We would have liked, by framing it in black, to express the pain we experienced in writing it.

Without being all honorable, the means to which we saw them resort, the supplication of their requests, the insinuation with the presidents, the conclusion, sometimes arrogant, that they drew from the *Declaration of Rights*, even, to a certain extent, the use of gold, were justifiable means; but the recourse to the Commune and the suburbs comes to constitute an illicit detour and a phase of Jacobinism. Pure in Louis XVI's cabinet, troubled before the Constituent Assembly, the Jewish question was to become festering with the Commune. The hidden habits of an ill-treated and degraded race, the slowness of the National Assembly, the confusion and disarray that were beginning to reign everywhere, and finally the fear of the plaintiffs of seeing their request definitively rejected after two years of proceedings and adjournments, explain this roundabout recourse, without excusing it.

Our greatest sadness was to meet Cerfberr there.

An Israelite of patriarchal morals and devoted to the emancipation of his brothers, burning with the desire to share with them the free and happy destiny he owes to the munificence of Louis XVI, he had successively interested in their cause, in tireless representations, Malesherbes and the King's ministers, Mirabeau and the presidents of the Constituent Assembly, Grégoire and certain hesitant consciences: that was enough!

He had to stop there.

Why did we have to meet him at number 56 rue des Blancs-Manteaux, in conciliation with the lawyer Godard?[216]

These interviews are undeniable. We found the following three letters in Godard's wallet; we give them with the spelling mistakes and awkward locutions that betray the Ghetto sojourn and the use of Judeo-Alsatian jargon.

First letter:

M. Théodore Cerfberr has the honor of wishing M. Godard good morning. As he agreed with you last Monday that you would take the trouble to come to his house on Saturday evening with his memoir to confer together, he asks you to let him know if you would like to come tomorrow evening at 6 p.m.; he will consequently notify the Jews of Paris.

This 14th day of January 90.

Please let me know your answer.

Second letter :

M. Théodore Cerfberr has the honor of wishing M. Godard good morning; he has the honor of sending him herewith the documents he requests.

January 12, 90.

Third letter :

Théodore Cerfberr has the honor of wishing Mr. Godard good evening and asks him to let him know if he can find him at his home tomorrow between midday and two o'clock accompanied by his colleagues.

This Saturday.

Although these letters contain nothing explicit or revealing, they are very serious. They show Cerfberr in joint action with Godard,

216 The letters addressed to Godard, preserved among his papers, all bear this street name and number. Around 1257, rue delà Vieille-Parcheminerie took the name deruedes Blancs-Manteaux from the costume of the Servites or *servants of the Virgin* who settled there. It still exists in Paris under this name. A number of Jewish families lived there in 1789. Godard had therefore chosen to live in the heart of the Jewish quarter.

to help and direct him in the supreme assault on the Jews.[217] The Commune, to which they were to have recourse, had not yet, no doubt, the dark colors it has since acquired. But the very fact of having recourse to its protection constituted, on the Israelite's part, an oblique and murky step. The only mitigating circumstance is that the thought of rehabilitating his brothers preoccupied him; he went, asking for this rehabilitation from all the powerful of the century, like the beggar who seeks to divine the rich in those he implores, like the bird that passes from one climate to another to find warmth! His stopovers included the antechambers of Versailles, the allées de Malesherbes, the presbytery of Emberménil, Mirabeau's study and the Hôtel de Clermont-Tonnerre. Here he is, according to the testimony of his own letters, climbing the staircase of the Jacobin Godard; we would have preferred to meet him under the windows of the Temple prison, where our benefactor will soon be locked up!

217 It goes without saying that Berr-Isaac-Berr, the other Jewish leader (see, above, pages 178-79) was also in secret contact with Godard. We found these two letters from him, alongside those from Cerfberr, in the Jacobin lawyer's portfolio:

First letter (with style and errors).

M. Berr-Isaac-Berr has the honor of wishing Monsieur Godard all the best and sending him two passages from the Talmud translated into French. Who will still dare to maintain that the Bible or the Talmud authorizes Jews to practice usury? Or who will still dare to doubt that those who forced the Jews to live by usury alone, forced them to violate both their own law and the law of the prince?

This Monday, January 18.

Second letter.

M Berr-Isaac-Berr wishes Monsieur Godard good evening for the second time and has the honor of sending him a passage from the Talmud translated into French, by which he will easily judge whether the Jews are intolerant of foreigners, or whether with such precepts one must be accused of hatred against all those who are not Israelites.

This Monday evening.

II

GODARD PRESENTS HIMSELF AND 50 JEWS ENROLLED IN THE NATIONAL GUIDE TO THE PARIS COMMUNE.

What did the young lawyer Godard do to hasten the emancipation of his clients?

The Jews had been criticized for having no love of a homeland outside Palestine, for being unpatriotic where they lived, and consequently for abhorring military service, since it would have meant serving a country that was not their own. Abbé Maury even exclaimed in the National Assembly, in his first speech against them: "Will you make soldiers of them? - Nothing in the world will persuade them to fight on Saturdays. This belief had thus become established among the people that Jews didn't want to be soldiers, or could only be bad soldiers.

Then, one day, during a general meeting of the Commune at the Hôtel de Ville,[218] all of a sudden, the doors opened, and fifty National Guardsmen appeared, all of them Jewish, and decorated with the cockade.[219] At their head was the young and enthusiastic lawyer Godard.

Gentlemen," he says, addressing the members of the Commune, "the Jews I present to you dare to say that they are worthy of your suffrages by the patriotic zeal which, from the moment of the Revolution, has transported their souls, covered them in civic armor, and made of them brave and tireless soldiers, entirely devoted to the salvation and prosperity of the nation."

He adds and points out that, out of five hundred Jews in Paris, more than a hundred have enlisted in the National Guard, and are sacrificing their time, their zeal and their strength to the defense of the Constitution.

Godard then asked the representatives of the Commune for a moral certificate on behalf of his clients, enabling him to appear, in the name of the city of Paris, before the deputies of the National

218 January 28, 1790.

219 GRAETZ, *Histoire des juifs*, t. XI, p. 212.

Assembly, and thus induce them to pass a law favorable to the Jews. He uttered these words, in which Jacobin action was certainly never more visible: "It's not making the law, but *preparing it through opinion*; it's making the legislator's work easier, and transforming, as it were, his intentions into decrees in advance: so that all kinds of glory, Messieurs, seem to be reserved for you. Sometimes you support a law that has already been made, by promptly consecrating it by opinion; sometimes *it's a law to be made that you prepare by actions, by facts, by a body of conduct that the legislators seem to be asking you for, and which they need in order to achieve all the good that it is in their desire to do.* There are no prejudices that can resist this incalculable power of opinion that prepares the law, or of the law that is seconded and consecrated by opinion."[220]

Clever and perfidious chatterbox! What arrogance and what astuteness! Gum if the legislators of the Constituent Assembly asked that the Commune make their mandate easier, by hatching their intentions through decrees from the Hôtel de Ville! Eraser if they needed to be pushed by opinion to do the good they wanted to do! The legislators would gladly have done without the terrible encouragement of the Commune. But legislative power no longer belonged to them. This encouragement taught them only too well!

A few days later, in a petition addressed to the National Assembly, the Jews wrote boldly, alluding to the protection of the Commune's representatives: "We would even dare to say that they anticipate, in a way, the National Assembly in order to hasten our civil existence. They *make* us citizens, so that this Assembly will *declare* us such..."[221]

At the same time, the *Courrier de Paris in the provinces* published this appeal: "Generous citizens, defend, defend the cause of these good Israelites; they are our brothers. God, the God we worship, brought them out of the land of slavery like us;

"Like us, through a thousand perils, they have crossed the Red

220 Godard's portfolio. — *Moniteur*, February 2, 1790. — Halphen, *Recueil des lois concernant les Israélites*, p. 199-203.

221 *Nouveau mémoire pour les juifs de Lunéville et de Sarguemines*, presented to the National Assembly. February 20, 1790, p. 5 (printed by Lottin, rue Saint-André-des-Arts, 1790), added to Godard's papers.

Sea, to reach the arid deserts of freedom, *which will soon be turned into delightful countryside, flowing with milk and honey*; they are our brothers, at last; they want to become our friends, and they will, in spite of the Rewbells, in spite of the Maurys," etc.[222]

222 *Le Courrier de Paris dans les provinces*, February 2, 1790, p. 390.

III

Two abbés, one of whom was president of the Commune, Abbé Mulot, and the other, Abbé Bertolio, strongly supported the cause of the Jews.

When the lawyer Godard delivered the speech we have just reported, the president of the Commune assembly was Abbé Mulot.[223] It is unlikely that the said abbé had previously asked his ecclesiastical superiors for permission to occupy such a chair. What Grégoire, parish priest of Emberménil, was for the Jews in the National Assembly, Abbé Mulot was for the Jews in the Commune assembly. He lived up to his name. When the beavers wanted to build their dam, this mulot helped them gnaw through the obstacles.

He answered the lawyer Godard and the fifty Jewish national guards as follows:

"You have come, Messieurs, to solicit the assembly of the Commune to issue a vow that seconds, to the nation's legislators, a request you make to them in the name of nature.

"I am proud, Messieurs, both of the fact that I can be the organ

223 Mulot (François Valentin), preacher, litterateur and deputy, born in Paris in 1749, died in 1804. 11 was canon of Saint-Victor at the beginning of the Revolution, whose principles he embraced. A member, then president, of the Paris municipality, he criticized the popular movements that so often took place in the capital. Elected to the Legislative Assembly, he made his mark only by proposing the prohibition of ecclesiastical costume and the abolition of gambling houses. Imprisoned for a time during the Terror, he later became a member of the Monuments Commission, commissioner of the Directoire in Mainz, where he taught belles-lettres, and showed himself to be one of the fervent apostles of the theophilanthropic sect. We have quite a number of his writings in a loose, incorrect style; among them: Essais de sermons prèchés à l'Hôtel-Dieu (Paris, 1781) ; Rêve d'un pauvre moine (Paris, 1789) ; Discours sur le serment civique (Paris, 1790) ; l'A imanach des sans-culottes (Paris,1794) ; Mémoire sur l'état actuel de nos bibliothèques (Paris, 1797) ; Essai de poésies légères (Mayence, 1798) : etc. We also owe him hymns and speeches for republican festivals, translations of Anacreon's Geese, Daphnis and C'iloé, Lockman's Fables, and so on.

(Pierre Larousse's dictionary).

of this assembly to you, and of the fact that you are not afraid to appear before it while I am in the chair.

"The distance of your religious opinions from the truths we all profess as Christians cannot prevent us, as men, from drawing closer to you; and, if we mutually believe ourselves to be in error, if we mutually believe we should complain, we can love each other.

"I cannot tell you what the precise wishes of the assembly will be on the substance of your request; but I can, at least, assure you both that its decisions will conform to the laws of reason and humanity, and that I will be the first to applaud whatever is determined to be favorable to your nation.

"As a first token of our fraternity, the assembly invites you, and through me, to attend the session."[224]

The day after this session, the journal of the municipality and districts of Paris reflected: "Abbé Mulot, in an embarrassing response for a clergyman, was able to reconcile the austerity of his ministry with the intentions of the assembly, of which he was the organ as well as its president. His speech merited general admiration, and the printing of it was ordered."[225]

He did not deserve ours. It was no longer the priest of the Catholic Church who answered, it was a priest-adventurer. How many giddy ministers have we seen compromise their ministry, and seek adventures in the Revolution! Mulot was one of them. They did the Jews' business. Their protection was all the more effective as their presence alongside them was less suspect.

Before the Commune, another abbot also lent the cause of the Jews the support of his religious character and his word: Abbé Bertolio. At a new session held on this subject at the Hôtel de Ville,[226] opposition voices were heard against the Jews, and Abbé Bertolio silenced the opposition with a fiery reply. He declared in the strongest terms "that it was an error, an error of spirit, to make the quality

224 Godard's portfolio.— *Moniteur*, February 2, 1790. — HALPHEN, *Recueil*, etc., p.203. — *Le Courrier de Paris dans les provinces*, February 2, 1790, p. 396-7.

225 *Journal de la municipalité et des districts de Paris*, anuary 29, 1790, p. 380.

226 January 30, 1790.

of citizen depend on religion; also a great error, to mix political questions with religious questions. In order to recognize these errors, and avoid the disaster they brought, it was necessary *for an event as happy and unexpected as the Revolution to rejuvenate France*... It is only too true that for centuries, Jews have been the victims of the cruelest persecutions and the most incredible intolerance. But the long duration of their suffering is all the more reason to help them. *Let us hasten to make them forget the crimes of our fathers*. Let us hasten to give back to the Jews what they should never have lost: their right as citizens, which is as immutable as the nature that gives it to them."[227] Strange abbot, who forgot the crime of Calvary to shift the accusation of *criminals* to the Christians! What a strange renewal of the world in 89! Placing themselves on the sole ground of reason and purely human brotherhood, the priests themselves came to bracket the trial of Jesus by Caiaphas, and to put their own Christian ancestors on trial for their conduct towards the Jews: *Let us hasten to make them forget the crimes of our fathers.*

227 Halphen, *Recueil*, etc., p. 208-14; Abbé Bertolio's speech is in full. -Graetz, *Histoire des juifs*, t. XI, p. 214-16.

IV

A BOLD UNDERTAKING BY THE JEWS: THEY TOURED THE 60 DISTRICTS OR SECTIONS OF PARIS, SEEKING THEIR SUPPORT; 59 DISTRICTS OUT OF 60 WERE IN FAVOR OF THE REQUEST FOR EMANCIPATION; ONLY ONE REFUSED ITS VOTE: THE DISTRICT OF FRIPIERS.

The Commune was therefore favorably disposed. But to persuade it to intervene fully with the National Assembly, the Jews, still advised by Godard, tried a bold move. They embarked on a tour of the various districts and neighborhoods of the capital, soliciting and collecting signatures of approval from each district in favor of their emancipation. Four of their number led the tour.[228] Godard's portfolio contains curious details of this tour:

For example: it was the Carmelite district that was particularly favorable to the emancipation project. Not only did it welcome the approach of the four canvassers, but it also began collecting signatures in the other districts.[229] What's more, it issued the Jews with an extremely flattering certificate of patriotism and good reputation, recommending them first to the Commune assembly, then to the National Assembly.[230] In short, the Carmelite district proved so well

228 An eyewitness who lived in 1841 recorded their names in the *Archives Israélites*: Mardochée Polak, Jacob Trenel, Goldschmidt, rentier, and the jeweler Jacob Lazard (Archives, year 1811, p. 502). This fact is also recounted by *Graetz*, t. XI, p. 216.

229 This zeal on the part of the Carmelite district can be explained by good neighborliness. It was in this district that the largest number of Parisian Jews lived. They must have rendered real services there, and lived on good terms with everyone, for this district to have been so zealous in promoting their emancipation.

230 Here is the certificate:

Extrait du procès-verbal des délibérations de l'Assemblée générale du district des Carmélites.

Friday, January 29, 1790.

The District Assembly, considering that, since the beginning of the Revolution, the Jews living in the district have always behaved with the greatest zeal and the purest and most generous patriotism;

disposed and took the cause of emancipation to heart, that Godard was able to say, when appearing before the National Assembly: *"Gentlemen, I present the Jews to you, not so much as my own clients, but as those of the Carmelite district."*[231]

An even more curious detail:

On their tour, the four canvassers, supported by the Carmelite district, obtained the unanimous support of the other Paris districts for emancipation, except for one, which stubbornly refused to support it. Who'd believe it, and who'd hold back a smile when they found out? In his notes, lawyer Godard says nothing about this. He even feigns, as a good lawyer, the unanimity of the districts' votes. But this curious exception is attested to by the Jews themselves. "The solicitors first went to the forty-eight sections of Paris, to urge them to support their request. Forty-seven accepted unanimously: only one refused: that of the "second-hand dealers of Les Halles!" This refusal requires no explanation."[232] — "Only the "resellers of Les Halles"

Considering that the disastrous prejudice which has hitherto kept them immersed in degradation was not likely to inspire in them the sentiments of good and loyal citizens; that the means of giving all Jews the energy befitting free men is to make them share in this honorable quality;

Considering finally that the Carmelite district, which contains the largest number of Jews, has been, as it still is, in the best position to learn about their political conduct, and to do them justice for the zeal and patriotism they have always shown; believing even that gratitude is due to them;

Unanimously decided to bring to the assembly of Commune representatives the district's wish that the Jews, whose good conduct and complete devotion to public service it attests, should henceforth enjoy the rights of citizens;

Further decided that this decree would be sent to the President of the National Assembly and to the 59 districts. For an extract in conformity with the original.

Signed: Gavot, one of the secretaries.
(Halphen, *Recueil*, etc., p. 206-7.)

231 Godard's portfolio.

232 *Archives israélites*, 1841, p. 502. - While the Archives israélites refer to sections, Godard's papers and the *Recueil officiel des lois* refer to districts. Paris was in fact divided into GO districts and 48 sections. Fifty-nine districts or forty-seven sections therefore approved the emancipation request: only the fripiers de la Halle rejected it.

refused to give their consent, as they feared competition."[233]

We can't help but reflect on the revolutionary passion that suddenly transforms the hostility of an entire city into support. All but one of the 48 sections of Paris supported the Jews' demand for emancipation. A few years earlier, when under Louis XV, the Jews, tolerated in Paris, wanted to take a few steps to obtain the right of bourgeoisie, all the merchants and traders of Paris rose up unanimously against the claim of *these outcasts*. As we write this, we have before us the *petition of the six bodies of merchants and traders of Paris against the admission of Jews*,[234] addressed to His Majesty King Louis XV. Certainly, the poor unfortunates are not portrayed in attractive colors: "The admission of this species of men," says the merchants' petition, "can only be very dangerous; they can be compared to wasps who enter hives only to kill the bees, open their bellies and extract the honey that is in their entrails; such are the Jews, upon whom it is impossible to suppose the qualities of citizens..."[235] And a little further on: "The Christian merchant trades alone, each trading house is in some way isolated, whereas the Jews are particles of quicksilver that run and stray, and which, at the slightest incline, unite into a main block, etc."[236] This was printed around 1760, and all the Paris merchants' bodies were unanimous in signing the petition to repel the Jews. A few years later, in 1789, what did we see? Every district in Paris, with the exception of the "second-hand dealers" district, requesting citizen status for these same Jews. Between these two attitudes in the same city, what had happened? Revolutionary passion.

The resellers were the only ones to prove their wisdom.

233 GRAETZ, t. XI, p. 216-17.

234 Preserved in the *Archives nationale*s, ADIB, XXVII, no. 36.

235 *Ibid*., piece 19.

236 *Ibid*., piece 24.

V

On the strength of all these approvals, the Commune sent a deputation to the National Assembly to obtain, or rather to impose, the decree of emancipation of the Jews. Godard submitted a petition to the Assembly, containing some extremely serious confessions. The delegates are greeted courteously by Talleyrand, but the matter is adjourned.

Abbé Mulot, president of the Commune, and the lawyer Godard, are in the presence of the National Assembly (February 25, 1790).

They lead a deputation sent by the Hôtel de Ville. They represent all but one of the 60 districts, and come, therefore, in the name of all these districts, in the name of the entire municipality, to demand the emancipation of the Jews. "All the districts, with the exception of Les Halles, had given their approval."[237]

Their demand was categorical. The story goes that they had gone to the National Assembly "to ask it, or rather *to force it* to sign the decree concerning the Jews."[238]

In Godard's papers, we found the minutes of the petition he submitted on behalf of the Commune to the National Assembly. Here are a few passages, including a significant admission, perhaps embarrassing for the Jews:

ADDRESS
OF THE ASSEMBLY OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COMMUNE
TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
on the admission of Jews to the civil registry.

Gentlemen,

"The destiny of most of the Kingdom's Jews is still undecided. Perhaps you were waiting for a strong opinion to strengthen your generous intentions and hasten the moment of your justice. We are delighted to be the first to bring you this opinion: it is not ours

237 Graetz, t. XI, p. 217.
238 *Ibid*., 217,

alone, it is that of the many districts of this capital; and it is the whole of Paris that is speaking to you at this moment through us.

"At the very moment of the Revolution, the Jews of Paris

their courage, their zeal, their patriotism, have earned the right to public recognition.

"We saw them with us, decorated with the national sign, helping us to conquer - and every day they help us to preserve - our common heritage.

"Ah, gentlemen, *if they have contributed to the conquest of freedom,* can they be condemned not to enjoy *their own work*? If they are true citizens, on what pretext should they be denied the title? We dare say they would deserve it as a reward, if it were not due to them as an act of justice.

" ... In the name of humanity and the fatherland, in the name of the social qualities of the Jews, of their patriotic virtues, of their keen love of freedom, we beg you to give them the title and rights of which it would be unjust for them to be deprived any longer. We regard them as our brothers, we long to call them our fellow citizens, Ah! already we treat them as such; our interest makes us need *to be confused with them*, our interest gives us the right to claim your justice for them and for us. Speed up their happiness and ours.

Arrested by us commissioners appointed by the Commune. Hôtel de Ville, this 24th day of February 1790.

Signed: GODARD,[239]
l'abbé BERTOLIO,
DUVEYRIER,
l'abbé FAUCHET."[240]

239 Godard's portfolio.

240 FAUCHET (Claude), *constitutional* bishop of Calva los, member of the Girondin Convention, born in Dornes (Nivernais) in 1711, beheaded on October 31, 1793. He entered Holy Orders at an early age, becoming King's preacher, Abbot of Montfort and Grand Vicar to the Archbishop of Bourges. He belonged to the sect of the *Illuminati*, and mixed his Christian principles with mystical reveries and reformist ideas; there was also in this priest, with his stormy, passionate soul, a tribune and even a warrior. On July 14th 1789, he was one of the electors gathered at the Hôtel de Ville. On that day, he harangued the people and marched at the head of a column, saber in hand, to attack the Bastille; three times he brought back the attackers who had been dispersed by fire from the fortress. - Charged by the Commune with delivering the eulogy for the citizens who had died during the battle, he took as the text of his speech these proles from Saint Paul: "*Vos enim ad libertatem eoeati*

This rather imperative petition is extremely curious. With the president of the Commune, Abbé Mulot, leading the deputation, that made three priests out of five deputies, who came to demand the emancipation of the Jews.

Note also this phrase, this admission, embarrassing perhaps, as we said, for the Jews: they contributed to the conquest of freedom. The Commune itself declared this, and used it as a basis for obtaining emancipation for its clients from the National Assembly. It asserts that the Jews *have contributed to the conquest of freedom*. What does this mean, if not that they had a hand in all the serious events of 1789 and 1790?

Finally, note the signatories' demeaning words: "Our interest makes it necessary for us *to be confused with them*. Unfortunately, this was a prophecy. How many degenerate Christians would later have no qualms about being confused with the Jews! The signatories even called it "a need." After these remarks, made to enlighten the reader, let's pick up the thread of the story with him.

Such, then, was the deputation sent by the Commune, in the name of the districts of Paris: a small troop determined to win the emancipation of the Jews that day.

But that day, too, the chair of the National Assembly was occupied by Talleyrand.

Talleyrand was undoubtedly in favor of the Jews. Nevertheless,

estis, Brothers, you are called to liberty." What was entirely new about this ceremony was that the preacher had himself contributed to the conquest he was celebrating; he had been in the midst of those whose memory he honored; he had incurred the same peril and shown the same intrepidity. Reports of the time record the prodigious effect of this speech on an audience dominated by the same passions and spirit as the orator. A civic crown was awarded to him, and one was immediately procured; a herald carried it before him to the Hôtel de Ville, where he was surrounded by all the officers of the district, between two companies marching with drums beating and ensigns unfurled. - During the blessing of the district flags. Fauchet was also responsible for delivering the patriotic sermon to the citizen soldiers; he also published various opuscules designed to propagate his doctrine of the union of Christianity and new ideas, including: *De la Religion nationale*, 1789; *Sermon sur l'accord de la. religion et de la liberté*, 1791.

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their admission to civil rights seemed to him, and to many others, to be fraught with consequences.

As a skilful man, he courteously welcomed the deputation, listened to a touching plea from Abbé Mulot, received the Commune's petition from Godard's hands, and replied: "The National Assembly has made it its sacred duty to restore to all men their rights; it decrees the conditions necessary to be an active citizen; it is in this spirit that it will examine, in its justice, the reasons that you set out, in such a touching way, in favor of the Jews. The National Assembly invites you to attend the session."[241]

In the session the following day (February 26), the Duc de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, who was very sympathetic to the Israelites, was already asking the Assembly to set a day when it would deal with their admission to civil status, when a deputy rose and replied: "I observe that the question relating to the Jews is, no doubt, a very important one, but that we have more important questions... I ask for the adjournment of the question on Jews."[242] This deputy remains unknown.

But, on his observation, in line with the secret wishes of most of the deputies, the question was again adjourned.

And so, fifty-nine districts out of sixty (i.e. all of Paris represented), had requested, demanded the entry of Jews into civil society, and the Constituent Assembly had refused: considerable proof of the repugnance and fear inspired by this solution.

241 *Moniteur* March 1, 1790,

242 *Moniteur* February 27, 1790.

VI

The Jews prove more astute than Talleyrand. Second intervention on their behalf by the Commune at the National Assembly; further adjournment.

From February 26, 1790 to May 7, 1791, three new attempts were made with the Constituent Assembly; but the result was always either an adjournment or thin concessions.[243]

Discouraged and embittered, the plaintiffs officially turned to the Commune for a second time.

It was Talleyrand who provided the opportunity. Was he or was he not an accomplice? In any case, the Jews, just as skilful and more skilful than he, took advantage of his famous report on freedom of worship.

Here's how it happened:

On Talleyrand's report, the National Assembly had decreed complete freedom of worship, and consequently freedom to erect religious buildings.

Until then, Jews had kept their oratories to themselves. Their religious ceremonies were tolerated, but performed far from the main road. A synagogue had no place visible to the sun like a Catholic church.

But Talleyrand decreed complete freedom of worship. As expeditious men, the Jews, taking immediate advantage of both Talleyrand's report and the Assembly's decree, acquired a spacious building for the exercise of their religion, displayed their religious ceremonies in broad daylight, and then came to propose, with their complaints and moans, this argument to the General Council of the Commune:

"Our religious slavery has ceased, but our civil slavery still lasts. And yet, if we have received from the law the right to build synagogues, can we not also receive from it the title and rights of citizens? Can we be citizens only in our synagogues, and strangers

243 These three attempts were: April 16, 1790 (*Moniteur* of April 17); July 20, 1790 (*Moniteur* of July 22); January 18, 1791 (*Moniteur* of January 20). See Chapter V, pp. 164-66, for a summary of these three attempts.

and slaves outside them? Wouldn't it be contradictory if the law recognized us on the one hand, and denied us on the other? *There can be no half-freedom, just as there can be no half-justice.*"[244]

This request from the Jews to the General Council of the Commune ended as follows: "It is the city of Paris that began, as it were, the reign of freedom for the Jews; it is up to it to complete, through its intercession with the legislators, a work worthy of its patriotism and enlightenment."[245]

The municipality of Paris not only did not remain insensitive to the request, but was determined to be consistent with the conclusions of Talleyrand's report. It immediately issued the following decree:

> DECREE OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF PARIS
> *of May 26, 1791.*
>
> The Municipal Body, penetrated by the justice of the request that the Jews are renewing with such honorable perseverance :
>
> Stop,
>
> That a new letter will be written to the National Assembly to place before its eyes both the request of the Jews and the wish of the municipality, and to urge it to formally extend to the Jews of the capital the consequence of the beneficent principles it has just enshrined concerning freedom of religious opinion.
>
> *Signed*: BAILLY, *mayor*.
> DE JOLY, *secretary-registrar*.

These words, "to urge her to formally extend

a threat to the Assembly. Nevertheless, the Constituent Assembly still felt strong enough to resist, and so it did. The Jewish question was once again postponed.

244 *Requête des juifs au Conseil général de la Commun*, written by Godard and found in his portfolio; also reproduced in the *Moniteur* of June 11, 1791.

245 *Ibid*.

VII

The Jews' indefatigable tenacity. The question adjourned 14 times returned one last time, on the very eve of the closing of the Assembly. Duport, a member of the Jacobin Club, settled it with a solemn appeal to the Declaration of the Rights of Man. The cornered National Assembly capitulated.

There was an inflexible logician at the Constituent Assembly: Duport.

Although a member of the nobility, Duport had been a member of the Revolution. After the storming of the Bastille, he had pushed for disorder, in order to *plow the furrow deep*, he said, i.e. to ensure the Revolution. A dark enthusiast of the time, he cried out at the Assembly: "*We are not working for France alone, but for all nations. All peoples listen to us. We are the avengers and preceptors of human kind.*" He was a member of the Jacobin club.[246] His authority was

246 In his *Histoire de la Révolution française*, t. IV, Bertrand de Molleville, Louis XVI's minister, has left some crushing revelations about Duport, if true. He got them from Louis XVI, who had learned them from Mirabeau himself after his rapprochement with the court. "On May 21, 1789, in the Amis réunis lodge, Adrien Duport had explained the reasons why we could be sure that no European government would make a serious opposition to the Revolution, and he had sketched out the whole plan.

he had sketched out the entire plan for the constitution of 1791. After lengthy discussions on this memoir, La Fayette, who was also on the committee if Mirabeau is to be believed, took the floor and said to Adrien Duport: "This is undoubtedly a great plan; but what are your means of execution? Do you know of any that are capable of overcoming all the resistance we can expect? You don't mention any. - It's true that I haven't mentioned any yet," replied Duenport.

But they are of such a nature that I shudder to think of them myself, and I can only decide to share them with you if you approve of my entire plan, if you are convinced that it is essential to adopt it, and that there is no other way to ensure not only the success of the Revolution, but also the salvation of the State..." After arousing the curiosity of his listeners, he added: "It is only by means of terror that one succeeds in putting oneself at the head of a revolution and in governing it. There is not a single case, in any country,

great at the Constituent Assembly, where he formed, with Lameth and Barnave, a triumvirate that had inherited Mirabeau's popularity.

It was to him that the Jews turned to fight the decisive battle, and draw from the Declaration of the Rights of Man the supreme deduction that had so struggled to emerge from it.

It has to be said that they were tenacious, and above all good logicians;

Tenacious, because in the space of two years, i.e. during the entire duration of the Constituent Assembly, the question of their emancipation had been presented by them fourteen times, rejected and postponed fourteen times by the legislators, and they were still there to present it to them a fifteenth time on the eve of the Assembly's dissolution;

Good logicians, because they demanded that logical consequences be drawn from the Declaration, which they did not want to see there. The legislators of 1789, disdaining the old Christianity, had wanted to build their new society on the model of mathematics. They boasted about it. Condorcet wrote: "The methods of the mathematical sciences, applied to new objects, have opened new roads to political and moral sciences. Jean-Jacques, in The Social Contract, had gone so far as to calculate mathematically the fraction of sovereignty that belonged to each individual. Well, when it came to mathematics, the Jews could teach anyone in this self-proclaimed new world a

that I cannot cite in support of this truth. So, however reluctant we all may be, we must sign up to the sacrifice of a few prominent people..." Leduc de la Rochefoucauld was struck by Adrien Duport's reflections and, like all the other members of the committee, adopted the plan and means of execution he proposed. Instructions in line with this plan were given to the principal agents of the insurrections committee, which was already organized and to which Adrien Duport was no stranger. Execution soon followed. The massacre of Messrs. de Launay, de Flesselles, Foulon and Berthier, and their heads carried at the end of a pike, were the first trials of this philanthropic conspiracy." Bertrand de Molleville, Histoire de la Révolution française, t. IV. p. 18ietsuiv. - Louis Blanc, in [Histoire de la Révolution française, t. II, p. 318, also attributes to Duport 1 the organization of the Paris massacres and the panics spread throughout the provinces. - It was therefore to this terrible sectarian that the Jews, tired of so many delays, turned to be summarily introduced into society.

thing or two. So, given the Declaration of the Rights of Man, they stood by, stubbornly determined to draw a consequence for their own benefit - every consequence!

So it was the eve of the closing. It was the penultimate session. There was no more time to lose, no more reprieve to accept. Duport rose and, in the midst of a solemn silence, uttered these words: "I believe that freedom of worship no longer allows any distinction to be made between the political rights of citizens on the basis of their beliefs. The question of the political existence of the Jews has been adjourned; however, Turks, Muslims and men of all sects are admitted to enjoy political rights in France. I ask that the adjournment be revoked, and that consequently it be decreed that Jews will enjoy the rights of active citizens in France."[247]

Rewbell, the stubborn opponent of the Israelites, wanted to fight Duport's proposal.

But Régnault de Saint-Jean-d'Augély, cutting him off, exclaimed: "I ask that all those who speak against this proposal be called to order, for they will be *fighting the Constitution itself*."[248]

When a troop retreats, if it can be thrown against an obstacle to destroy it or force it to surrender, it is said to be cornered. This was the 'no-win' situation for the Constituent Assembly, at the advanced hour of its retreat. It was 'faced with a choice: either lay down its arms to the Jews, or destroy the Constitution, its work, which for the Constituent Assembly was tantamount to destroying itself before history. It was cornered.

The famous Declaration of the Rights of Man had become a dead end. The Assembly remained silent in the face of Régnault de Saint-Jean-d'Angély's apostrophe. Victory remained with the Jews.

247 *Moniteur* September 20, 1791.
248 *Ibid*.

Chapter VIII

The different approaches of Louis XVI and the revolution with respect to Jewish emancipation

I

The comparison between the royal and revolutionary solutions to the Jewish question casts a bright light on the course of modern events.

We now know all the details of the great labor. The steps the Jews had to take, the means they employed, the men to whose protection they had recourse, all the perseverance they deployed, all the paths they tried, all the skill and resources they expended, finally their complete success at the Commune: the reader knows it all. He knows the truth.

Well, now, before exposing the great day of emancipation, we're going to gather ourselves in austere impartiality. What's the point? This is the moment to compare Louis XVI's undertaking concerning the Jews with the undertaking of the Revolution. We need to ask ourselves what, in all probability, would have been the solution adopted by Louis XVI had he peacefully completed his undertaking, and what, on the other hand, was the solution adopted by the Revolution. Royal solution, revolutionary solution: who can fail to see at once how important the differences will be, if we find any? They will give us the means to penetrate the secret of many clashing, bizarre and even disturbing aspects of the modern situation of Christians and Jews.

So let's reconcile and discern:

Louis XVI undertook, as did the Revolution and even long before it, the emancipation and rehabilitation of the Israelites. We have amply demonstrated this.

They wanted - the monarch and the Revolution, both of them - the entry of the Israelites into society, their participation in the civil life of peoples. Malesherbes in the name of Louis XVI, Mirabeau in the name of the Revolution, were the two organs of this express will. That's not the difficulty.

Where is the difficulty?

In this proposition:

Entry of the Israelites into society, participation by them in civil life; but *to what extent?*

"To a certain extent, at least in the beginning", would have answered the government of Louis XVI, had it been free;

"Without measure," replied the Revolution.

II

THE POINTS OF VIEW OF KING LOUIS XVI FOR THIS SOLUTION; THE POINTS OF VIEW OF THE REVOLUTION.

What points of view did Louis XVI have in mind when he undertook the emancipation of the Israelites? What other points of view did the Revolution take into account?

As a very Christian king, Louis XVI did not abandon the horizons of Christianity when he set out to emancipate the Israelites. He stuck to them, and aimed to rehabilitate and rejoice these unfortunate people, precisely because Christianity, the repository of mercy, discerns in the centuries the opportune moment to apply it.

The Revolution took no account of this religious principle. It saw in the Jews only fallen men who had to be raised up alongside other men; its enterprise was purely humanitarian.

Louis XVI was not only a very Christian king, but also a vigilant father of the Christian people. As such, he sought, by being merciful and liberal to the Jews, not to compromise the interests of the Christian people. His magnanimity was far-sighted. In wanting to adopt the Jews as his children, he was careful not to undermine or expose the position of his other Catholic children, doubly dear to his heart, because they were dear to the Church;

The Revolution, whose head wears the Phrygian bonnet as its emblem, never had any idea of these delicate situations.

Finally, in studying the emancipation of the Israelites, Louis XVI was concerned about the future of France;

The Revolution had only one concern: Alsace, devoured by usurers. It reproached the Jews only for their habits and the vices inherent in long servitude. Louis XVI saw in them a deeper hostility, more difficult to eradicate: religious hostility.

These are the general points of view under which, in the same liberal enterprise, both Louis XVI and the Revolution appear. In light of them, we shall see the profound differences between the royal solution that was being prepared, and the revolutionary solution that prevailed.

III

First major difference: of these two modes of emancipation, gradual emancipation and complete and immediate emancipation, Louis XVI would have adopted the first; the Revolution imposed the other, despite public opinion, despite Alsace, despite the Constituent Assembly itself: it was in the spirit of the Revolution! –

There were two modes of emancipation.

Gradual emancipation;

Complete and immediate emancipation.

The first was to gradually introduce the duties and rights of citizenship to these men who had never been part of society, new though they were old as the world, and full of new ideas. They will learn about freedom and equality. They will rise, as if by degrees, to the full exercise of civil life. The legislator will make perfect citizenship a reward for the fulfillment of the first social duties.

But what were the concessions, and what were the reservations, of this gradual emancipation?

Various rather vague projects had been submitted? One of them (1790) formulated these concessions and reservations as follows:

"That the Jew be a citizen in all respects in which he will not be a harmful citizen, very good;

"That all the rights in the exercise of which our laws can monitor his conscience be granted to him without distinction, very good;

"For example: that he be allowed to live anywhere in the kingdom; "To vote in the nation's primary assemblies, to elect representatives, and to participate with other citizens in the drafting of instruction manuals;

"Hold a place in public and communal deliberations;

"Acquire a house to live in with his family;

"That he may be admitted to all liberal and mechanical arts guilds; trade, farm, cultivate, lease land and even acquire real estate;

"Finally, let him worship freely, as long as he does not disturb the peace;

"All this is possible, even charitable, and must be generously granted to new citizens.

"But under *no circumstances* should Jews be eligible for political, administrative or judicial bodies. That is to say, he must not be appointed to any of those important and delicate functions over which the *principles of Christian morality* must always preside."[249]

Such was gradual emancipation, with its reservations and precautions.

Complete and immediate emancipation, on the other hand, consisted in eliminating all intermediaries, immediately declaring the Jew a perfect citizen, and telling him: "From now on, you belong to society, and society belongs to you.

The leaders among the Jews - Cerfberr, Berr-Isaac-Berr and the *Bataillon des Juifs Parisiens* being the most prominent - were extremely apprehensive about gradual emancipation, its reservations and its temperaments. Their most important memoir, addressed to the Constituent Assembly on January 28, 1790, strongly condemned and fought against it:

"The right of citizenship must be granted to the Jews, without restriction and without delay; it would be both unjust and dangerous to try to prepare them to receive it by gradual improvements, and it would also be unjust and dangerous not to clothe them with it with the greatest promptitude...

"... Would it be right to deprive them of their rights, to condemn them to isolation and opprobrium, because there are debased Jews among them? If these are not yet worthy, they will become so. If they are not yet worthy, must we deprive the others?

"Justice rejects all temperaments.

"Now consider the disadvantages that would result:

"By delaying the moment of civilization for the Jews, your

249 *Pétition des juifs à l'Assemblée nationale*, 23 janvier 1790. p. 10, p. 92-93.

temperaments would have the object of giving them special laws... But we say it loud and clear: the more of these special regulations you make, *the more you will fortify the dividing line* that has hitherto existed between Jews and Christians; whereas common efforts must tend to *erase it entirely*."[250]

This memorandum, addressed by the Jews to the National Assembly and signed by *Cerfberr* and *Berr-Isaac-Berr,* was written by their dear friend the lawyer Godard.[251]

We could reply to him and to them: that the question was precisely whether it was opportune to erase the demarcation line completely, to bring down the wall of separation entirely. Wouldn't there be any danger in abruptly destroying the wall? On the contrary, wouldn't it be wise to first open communication gates?

These are the doors that Louis XVI would have kindly opened, allowing the Israelites to enter, in groups, into the civil life of France, but with reservations. It seems clear to us, in fact, that Louis XVI did not think of complete emancipation the first time around. The wise conduct of the monarch and the circumspect spirit of the French monarchy leave no doubt as to the precautions that would have surrounded the royal benefit. We proved this abundantly in our first book.[252]

But here's an important comment on this gradual emancipation:

That the Christian monarchy opted for this mode of emancipation is hardly surprising;

That the old Jews of the Ghetto looked askance at any emancipation announced to them, however gradual, and did not share the impatience of their leaders: this was also natural; these old Jews, petrified and dry as bones on the road of centuries, feared, for all sorts of good reasons, the unknown of civil resurrection;[253]

250 *Pétition des juifs à l'Assemblée nationale*, January 23, 1790. p. 10, p. 92-93.

251 In a letter to M. Mallet du Pan, director of the *Mercure*, Godard acknowledges that he is the author of this memoir, this petition by the Jews (unpublished letter, part of Godard's portfolio).

252 *Entrée des Israélites dans la Société française*, p. 459-465.

253 *Entrée des Israélites*, pp. 404-410, where we presented the development of their fears.

It was to be expected that Alsace, which was following the ups and downs of this rising Hebrew tide with terrible anxiety and exasperation, would cry out: "The degrees, the dams!

But what will come as a surprise, and by the same token a considerable boost to the party of gradual emancipation, is that this project counted among its supporters the most ardent friend of the Jews, Abbé Grégoire, and better still, almost the entire Constituent Assembly;

Grégoire had written: *the need to prepare Jews and Christians for this reform; the time needed to bring it about;* he called for two generations to achieve it;[254]

And, with the exception of Mirabeau,[255] the Constituent Assembly was of the same opinion: the proof is that it hesitated to issue a decree and, seeking to gain time, haggled, crumbling emancipation by granting a few concessions, from time to time, to the plaintiffs.

So there you have it, on the side of gradual emancipation, the whole of public opinion, broken down in this way: the King, the old Talmudist Jews, Alsace, Grégoire, the Constituent Assembly. But then, how did it happen - astonishingly and unexpectedly - that the solution was quite different, that it was total emancipation, without guarantees, without conditions? There can only ever be one answer: this result was in the spirit of the Revolution!

A solution imbued with wisdom, moderation, slowness and prudence was not possible for the Revolution. It would have been at odds with the spirit of incontinence and outburst that was beginning to reveal itself.[256] If it had adopted gradual emancipation, i.e. tem-

254 *Essai sur la régénération physique, morale et politique des juifs*, Chap. xxvi.

255 In the January 28, 1790 memorandum presented by the Jews to the Assembly, but written by Godard, there is this note, this admission: "The authors who have written in favor of the Jews have shared, in our opinion, this same error of wanting to soften their lot by degrees, instead of making it immediately as it should be. M. le comte de Mirabeau is perhaps the only one who, in his writing on Mendelssohn, did not fall into this error." p. 94.

256 M. Thiers said: "Even in the most beautiful and generous of revolutions, even in the greatest of men, restraint is the first duty, restraint is the great secret. *Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire*. t. XVII, Chapters I, III, p.

pered, prudent, it would no longer have been the Revolution. On the contrary, it showed what it was, by decreeing a fiery emancipation, i.e. immediate and total.

899 - Incontinence, outbursts of temper, are the essence of the revolutionary spirit,

IV

EXPLANATION OF THESE WORDS: "IN THE SPIRIT OF THE REVOLUTION." ON THE OCCASION OF THE JEWISH QUESTION, IT SHOWED ITS SPIRIT OF INCONTINENCE.

"But such a judgment is slander and obscurantism", will not fail to exclaim, on reading these lines, the outrageous partisans of liberty.

No, gentlemen, we are not slandering; God has given us the grace to judge justly. Reflect, yourselves, on this contrast that struck us singularly:

Here is an Assembly - the Constituent Assembly - which for the whole of its existence (two years) has been dealing with this serious question;

This Assembly, so enthusiastic, so expeditious in its dealings, takes up this question up to fourteen times, without settling it; it is repugnant to it even to settle it;

When it does decide on a solution, there is only one voice to tell it in what direction; the monarch says: Gradual emancipation; the Israelites' warmest supporter, Abbé Grégoire, says: Gradual emancipation; the whole of Alsace cries out: No emancipation! but, if it has to be that way, gradual, only gradual; the Jews themselves, for the most part, want no other;

Public opinion therefore awaits gradual emancipation;

And then, all of a sudden, this Assembly, which has struggled, stiffened, against a solution to be given, which has refused it many times, gives it, and, in this solution, drops everything, sacrifices everything, itself and public opinion!

We firmly repeat that only the revolutionary spirit can bring about such theatrical coups. The Revolution dominated the Constituent Assembly, and led it. It said: "You had judged like this, but you'll decide like this!

Have we slandered?

V

Terrible disadvantages of this mode of emancipation predicted to Godard, back in 1789.

"The Revolution did well to impose its decision; it did well to wrest the decree from the hands of Louis XVI, and even from the hands of the Constituent Assembly, at a time when the emancipation decreed was only going to be gradual; it did well: for Louis XVI had set a goal, a limit; the Revolution, in its momentum, exceeded that goal! With Louis XVI, freedom would have had its reservations; with the Revolution, it didn't, it was freedom!"

We reply:

It's true, with the Revolution, the goal was exceeded; or, at least, the time we wanted to give to initiation, to learning about freedom, was devoured. Not only did the Revolution *devour centuries,* as Comte de Maistre so aptly wrote, *it also devoured the intermediaries*;[257] but was this suppression of intermediaries a good thing?

Our conviction is that it was a disaster.

A contemporary of 1791, a friend of Godard's, had the courage to predict this disaster to him.

Godard had acquired, in the trade of his clients, a forehead of brass, and a neck like an iron bar. A burgher from the Saint-Roch district, this close friend of Godard's had been publicly called by him "*a man of prejudice, lacking in common sense*," because he had taken a contrary view to his own, on the question of the Jews:

He wrote to him:

> "... Be convinced of one truth, and that is that your clients can never win their case soon enough according to my wishes. I shall gladly see the day when the Jews are compensated. But I shall not be truly satisfied (and I speak to you as a true citizen) until their admission has been pronounced by the National Assembly

257 Abbé Grégoire said of the edict given by Joseph II in favor of the Jews of Austria at almost the same time: "*It has the defect of crossing intermediaries.*" - (*Motion en faveur des juifs*, by Grégoire, p. 39).

only after it has foreseen and ruled out *the terrible disadvantages that would result from such a favor, hastily and thoughtlessly granted.*

"Farewell, my friend, remember (and let us agree once and for all), that our attachment can last without our opinions resembling each other, and that, when I am forced, in the district of Saint-Roch, to open an opinion on any object whatsoever, I will be allowed not to hold to the one you will have had in the district of Blancs-Manteaux."

Your friend: BILLUART.[258]

Paris, February 11, 1790.

This letter thus read:

"A similar favor, *hastily and thoughtlessly granted*, would result in *terrible inconveniences;*"

At a distance of ninety-nine years, the reader can judge whether Godard's friend was mistaken, and whether the inconveniences are slight!...[259]

258 This unpublished letter is part of Godard's portfolio.

259 The most pro-Jewish historians, who have examined the dispute cold, have regretted that emancipation was not gradual; for example: MALVEZIN, *Histoire des juifs de Bordeaux* (p. 273-4); HALLEZ. *Histoire des juifs de France*. Here's what the latter says in his introduction: "We'll have to ask ourselves whether we didn't go too far the first time, and whether it wouldn't have been a wiser and more far-sighted policy to ease the transition and subordinate the acquisition of citizenship rights to the fulfillment of civic duties. At that time of easy training, we saw only a question to be resolved between an oppressive majority and an oppressed minority, and we proclaimed the equality of the Jews before civil law, without even worrying about whether the Jews wanted to be citizens, whether they could be citizens, whether all their past, if all their habits were not opposed to it for a long time to come... It should have been remembered that it is not always permissible for a statesman to substitute justice and equality for an unjust and violent situation, without transition and without consideration."

VI

A second and even more serious difference: the Revolution based the emancipation of the Jews on the rights of man. Had Louis XVI been free, he would never have chosen such a basis, disastrous beyond belief. Comparisons to help us understand.

Historians have pointed out this first difference, which we have just developed: patient and gradual emancipation with Louis XVI, fiery and total with the Revolution. There is a second, more serious, more profound difference, which historians have unfortunately overlooked; or perhaps they thought it prudent to keep quiet about it?

We have put the *Declaration of the Rights of Man* on trial, with such merciless criticism as to tire even the eyes and mind of the reader; but here is the coup de grâce:

The Revolution based and supported the emancipation of the Jews on the *rights of man*; Louis XVI, had he been free, would never have chosen such a basis.

We'll be asked: what basis would the monarch have chosen?

- We answer: *Christian public law*.[260]

- But why wouldn't he have accepted human rights as a basis?

- Because, on the one hand, in the heart of a king of France, and especially of a monarch like Louis XVI, there was the most attentive, tender and far-sighted solicitude for the interests of the Christian people, and, on the other hand, this far-sighted solicitude would have made him realize at once the dangers that could result, for his people, from an emancipation of the Jews based on human rights. Here we come to the most delicate, the most important, point of this great question. Please consider the following:

At first sight, the *rights of man* appeared to be a neutral ground, a transaction where Christian and Jew, long bitter enemies, could finally meet and get along. But let us beware: by adopting *man*,

260 His letters patent of 1784 concerning the Jews are proof enough of this (see *l'Entrée des Israélites*, Book I); *Des Juifs en France*, by Dallez. page 25-27 of the introduction,

humanity, as the basis of his encounter with the Jew, the Christian was descending, not out of humility, but out of forgetfulness of his Christian dignity; he was degrading himself; he was lowering himself, to meet at the level of the Jew who, on the contrary, was rising and rising again. Yes, we'll have the courage to say it, of all his contracts or exchanges with the Hebrews, the Christian never made a more blind or disastrous one. It was the abandonment of the *supernatural*, that not only heavenly but earthly advantage which came to him from Christ, and which made him superior; he rejected the evangelical pearl!...[261]

This consequence, disastrous in the individual realm, was preparing, even more disastrous, in the social realm. Indeed :

With this declaration that in politics he was a man like the Christian, and that the Christian was in no way superior to him and had no rights other than those he himself possessed, the Israelite was going to be authorized to present himself everywhere, to compete or intrigue everywhere, to compete for any position in society. No one will be able to forbid, withhold or bar him from anything. If circumstances or ambition bring him close to the throne, or even to the highest rank, who can deny him access? who has the right to do so? He's a man, a citizen, a pretender, just like everyone else!

Two comparisons will illustrate the peril of a similar emancipation based on the insane Declaration of the Rights of Man:

The first comparison: the famous Trojan horse. We made it the subject of a whole chapter at the beginning of this book, to draw attention to it. It's worth reading again. The Declaration of the Rights of Man was the Trojan horse of French society. Instead of the Greeks, the modern Hebrews have emerged.

The second comparison: the serpent's head and its rings;

"The movements of the snake differ from those of all other animals; one cannot say where the principle of its development lies; for it has neither fins, nor feet, nor wings, and yet it flees like a shadow, it magically vanishes, it reappears and disappears again, like

261 See the explanation of this unfortunate condescension in *Entrée des Israélites*, p. 319-321.

a little azure smoke or the flashes of a sword in the darkness."[262] Beneath this poetry, here is what is very real:

The snake has such elasticity, such agility, that as soon as its head has passed somewhere, it immediately pulls all the rings. It's the head that opens the way for the rest of the body. *Caput serpentis observa*," says a Father of the Church, "observes the head of the serpent. It is this that must be crushed as soon as it appears, for if the head passes through the slightest opening, all the rings have immediately passed through with it."[263]

The learned and perceptive bishop follows up his remark with a fine moral application: "In temptations," he says, "if an evil thought presents itself to the mind, it's the serpent's head that appears! If, unfortunately, you let it into your mind, if you let it pass, all the rest of the temptation will pass through and settle in your heart... Crush the head, stop the evil thought and you will avoid the other disadvantages of temptation: *caput calca, et evades cæteros motus*."

Following on from the *moral* application of the great awakening, we dare to point out a *social* application:

The *Declaration of the Rights of Man* was, for French society, the head of the snake. With such a principle, the most unexpected, unheard-of and fearsome consequences will quickly pass, veritable reptile rings: among these rings, the vitality and preponderance of the Jews.

In writing these lines, it is certainly not our intention to equate Israel with the crawling animal. Far be it from us to do so! We merely wish to point out that the *Declaration of the Rights of Man* has been, to the entry of the Jews into society, what the head of the serpent is to the rings of its body. The *rights of man* led to the entry of the Jews, just as the head of which we speak leads to one ring, then two, then all the others. With extraordinary volubility, they became citizens as soon as the pernicious principle was admitted; and citizens today, they will be masters tomorrow, they already are! We defy refutation!

If any Israelite reader has been shocked by the comparison we have had to use, we beg with all our heart the One represented by

262 CHATEAUBRIAND

263 AUGUSTINE.

the brazen serpent to heal the wound made by our pen!

Such was the immense peril of an emancipation based on human rights. In 1791, many foresaw and feared it. The Constituent Assembly foresaw it better than anyone, since it was still hesitating, and since the resounding clamors of Alsace never ceased to warn it; but, let's face it, the Assembly didn't have the courageous humility to admit to itself that it had made a mistake, that its Declaration of Rights was dangerous, and, not having had the courage of this admission, it didn't have, either, that of breaking, with loyal and French hands, the fatal instrument it had made! ...

Is it now necessary to prove at length that Louis XVI, had he been free, would never have chosen such a basis for emancipation? Ah! he loved the Church too much, the Christian people too much! When the Estates General asked him to sanction the Constitution of 1789, he made this reservation: "I'm not explaining myself on the *Declaration of the Rights of Man*; it contains very good maxims to guide your work; but it contains principles open to different applications and even interpretations."[264] And later, in the prison of the Temple, the royal prisoner wrote on his will: "I pray God to receive the deep repentance I have for having put my name (even though it was against my will) to acts which may be contrary to the discipline and belief of the Catholic Church,[265] a Such an emancipation of the Jews, so formidable in its starting point and consequences, Louis XVI would never have chosen it, nor adopted it of his own accord. Yes, he would have adopted a mode of emancipation that was honorable for the Israelites, but at the same time tutelary for the Christian people. In a word, as King of France and very Catholic, he would have acted with the tact of the situation. The Revolution did not have this tact, nor could it have!

If you think about it, this is what will always distinguish the actions of the Christian monarchy from those of the godless Revolution. A French king brought tact to affairs; the French Revolution replaced it with brutality. The Jewish question is palpable proof of this. With perfect tact, Louis XVI went step by step, degree by de-

264 POUJOULAT, *Histoire de la Revolution*. p. 121.

265 *Ibid*., p. 321.

gree, towards this emancipation; he loved the poor Jews, he wanted them to be free, enlightened and happy, but at the same time he was jealously careful not to compromise the interests of his Christian subjects. He sought a rapprochement that was honorable for some, tutelary for others: he succeeded. The Revolution, as a proud parvenue, said to the Jews: "Enter," without worrying whether, with this entry, would not coincide the exit and the withering of the Christian and French influence. Supposing she had foreseen this, she must have felt an infernal joy!

Between the king and the Revolution, the poor Constituent Assembly thought like the king, in this question of the Jews; and yet it emancipated them as the Revolution wanted;

"*We never go so far as when we don't know where we're going*." Cromwell said that;

This is the story of the Assembly of 1789.

In proclaiming the famous *rights of man* as the basis of society, the Assembly had no thought whatsoever of the Jews. By the time it saw them and tried to stop them, it was too late. With the serpent's head, that first ring had passed, and many more were to follow!

VII

M. DE BONALD'S JUDGMENT ON THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY'S ACT CONCERNING THE JEWS: HOW RIGHT IT IS TO COMPLETE EL' THIS JUDGMENT.

M. de Bonald has judged the act of the Constituent Assembly concerning the Israelites. His pamphlet, entitled *Sur les Juifs*, throws lightning bolts;

Lightning, as in illumination, and lightning, as in anger;

Here are the two:

"The Assembly declared them *active citizens*: a title which, with the contemplation of the newly decreed *rights of man*, was then regarded as the highest degree of honor and beatitude to which a human creature could lay claim!

"... But the Jews were rejected by our mores much more than they were oppressed by our laws.

"The Assembly made the enormous and deliberate mistake of putting its laws in contradiction with morals.

"As active citizens, Jews were soon to be called upon to participate in power itself.

" ... Inconsiderate legislators!

"... Let us take care that the emancipation of the Jews does not turn into the oppression of Christians.

"... Christians *may be deceived by Jews*, but they *must not be governed by them*;

"This dependence offends their dignity even more than the greed of the Jews offends their interests..."[266]

To these lightning bolts that illuminate, but pierce, may we be allowed to attach one that descends from God's justice:

"Abstract man" was invented by a superb society to get rid of Jesus Christ;

From this same "abstract man" came the Jews;

266 *Oeuvres de M. de Bonald, Mélanges littéraires, politiques et philosophiques*, t. I, pages 309, 371, 378, 380.

And it so happened that, Christ no longer counting in the government of this society, *the deceivers* found an open road to become *governors*!

Monsieur de Bonald, you said, in a biting style: "*Christians may be deceived by Jews, but they must not be governed by them.*" If the deceivers are taking their place among the governors, whose fault is that? To the Christians of the Constituent Assembly, who dismissed the Man-God!

...

O Louis XVI, why weren't you allowed to live, and to govern!

Chapter IX
Emancipation Day. Israelites admitted to French Society on September 27, 1791.

I
September 27th and the Emancipation Decree.

Let us broaden the horizons of our thinking: here we are faced with the grave and solemn Emancipation Day. It is a day with broad outlines; and if it has been announced with dark revolutionary hues, it must also have providential and reassuring ones.

The date is September 27, 1791; the venue is the Salle du Manège, near the Tuileries, where the Constituent Assembly held its penultimate session.

We have recounted above (Ch. VII. p. 217-20) what happened inside the room: the supreme attempt by the Jews, the support of Jacobin Duport, the capitulation of the Assembly. But what was happening outside the room was no less exciting.[267]

A poet of renown in Germany, Louis Wihl, has depicted with striking color the expectation of all listening Israel, in the guise of the Wandering Jew, at the door of the Assembly: we borrow from him this page of great effect:

> A man in ancient costume,
> listens at the door of the assembly of peoples.
> His face betrays deep pain,
> the snow from his beard streaming down his chest.
> His gaze is fixed, strange,
> like that of a marble statue.
> He brushes his long hair away from his ear:
> shyly huddled in the corner of the door,
> he listens breathlessly,

267 This hall was located on the rue de Rivoli, near the rue Castiglione. It had previously housed a riding school. The Constituent Assembly and the Convention held their sessions here.

as if a single word uttered in the room
would end his hereditary suffering
and after two thousand years of fatigue,
grant rest to his long journeys.
In his right hand is a book,
for his salvation or condemnation;

An obscure and mystical enigma, still unexplained to this day!
"The stag stalked by the hunter,
"finally succumbs in its flight,
"when he dashes headlong into the waves,
"and plunges into it covered in blood.
"I am the beast hunted, forced, chased across the world.
"In storms of fire and sea,
"I sought death in vain.
"I had to live, to exist
"and never see freedom!
"But now I see the dawn
"that delivers me from all my ills,
that heals me of all my sufferings.
Thus speaks the deeply moved old man;
He listens: something stirs in the room.
He listens; a word bursts out:
"All men are equal;
may Ahasuerus be delivered
from his eternal evil and his eternal pain!"[268]

There is greatness in this poetry. But it's good to follow it with the practical, authentic act of emancipation. We are transcribing it, as we found it in the National Archives; it is common to Louis XVI and the Constituent Assembly:

Louis, by the grace of God and the constitutional law of the State, King of the French: To all present and future, greetings.

The National Assembly has decided, and we will and order the following:

DECREE OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
OF SEPTEMBER 27, 1791

The National Assembly, considering that the conditions necessary

268 *Louis Wihl*, French-language edition, p. 230-2.

> to be a French citizen and to become an active citizen are fixed by the Constitution, and that any man who, meeting the said conditions, takes the civic oath and undertakes to fulfill all the duties imposed by the Constitution, is entitled to all the advantages it provides;
>
> Revoke all adjournments, reservations and exceptions inserted in the preceding decrees, with respect to Jewish individuals who take the civic oath.
>
> Mandate and order all administrative bodies and courts, that the present decrees be recorded in their registers, read, published and posted in their respective departments and jurisdictions, and executed as the law of the kingdom. In witness whereof we have signed these presents, to which we have affixed the seal of the State.
>
> *Signed*: LOUIS.
>
> *And sealed with the State seal.*
>
> And below, M. L. F. DU PORT.

When this decree was made known, immense emotion swept through all the synagogues, not only in France, but also abroad. Louis Wihl's poetry was not entirely a fiction, the fine ear of the Juif-Errant had bent down at the door of the Assembly!

The jolt felt by Israel in the midst of its dispersion bore some resemblance to that felt in Europe at the news of American independence. It has been said of American independence, when it became known: "Among the men who, from all the remotest corners of old Europe, felt so moved by the news of what a small people of the New World was doing, no one quite understood the deep and secret cause of the emotion he felt, but all listened to this distant noise as a sign; what it announced, they did not yet know. It was like the voice of John crying out from the depths of the desert that new times are at hand.[269] Something similar happened in synagogues the world over, when news reached them that Louis XVI and the French National Assembly had emancipated the Jewish people. None of these dispersed people fully understood the deep, secret cause of the emotion they felt, but they all listened to this distant sound as a sign. They had no doubt that the destiny of all Israel was at stake in what had just taken place.

269 TOCQUEVILLE, *Mèl.*, p. 71.

II

The sombre aspect of this day: at the same time as it decreed the entry of the Jews into French society, the Constituent Assembly accepted the homage of Volney's book on Ruins. The Jews are indeed about to make their entry through immense rubble.

To stay true to the truth, we need to distinguish between two kinds of hues on that day of September 27, 1791: some dark, others with the flashes of light familiar to Providence.

Which are the darker shades?

So, in 1791, the Constituent Assembly decreed the entry of Jews into society;

On this same date in 1791, almost at the same hour, at the same minute, the Assembly accepted Volney's tribute to the Ruins.

Volney was a member of the Constituent Assembly as a deputy. His book on the Ruins is pretentious, declamatory, even cold and boring. But it was written with a clear anti-religious purpose. This was enough, in those sad days, to exalt him to the skies. The Assembly solemnly accepted the tribute.

What gloomy prophecy was there in this homage and in this acceptance?

Ruins! That, alas, was the conclusion of all the Assembly's work: after two years of toil, it had ended in nothing but disaster. "It has set itself the mission of changing the world. No respect stops it, no venerable majesty intimidates its demolishing decrees... With every blow the Assembly strikes, we hear the institutions of centuries crumble."[270]

The Ruins: "It translated the ideas of the XVIII[TH] century into action; it rushed through the old social edifice like a bull through a glass house, and soon everything was in shambles."[271]

Ruins! She had substituted Rousseau's Social Contract for the Gospel of the Redeemer, the rights of man for the rights of God:

270 Poujoulat, *la Révolution*, p. 165.

271 *Ibid*., 225.

how could dust and chaos not respond to such a substitution?

Ruins! The Assembly has placed the axe at the roots of monarchy; others will strike; but it is the Assembly that has prepared the blow.[272] - "The discrediting of royalty, a radical flaw in the '91 Constitution, preoccupied the Assembly in the final weeks of its existence; the Constituents recoiled from their work; Barnave, Chapelier and Malouet would have liked a severe revision. But passions are not easily corrected, and the Assembly left without having been able to repair its faults, produced by a neglect of morals, traditions and national history. It left having foolishly decreed that none of its members could be part of the next legislature. The Constituent Assembly thus left the field open to ignorance, incapacity, demagoguery and storms. On closing day, the people had oak wreaths in their hands, but they awarded them to Robespierre and Pétion."[273]

The Ruins at last! Mirabeau had glimpsed their breadth and depth, and regretted having begun them. He, the giant of the Revolution, said with sadness, "I would despair of having done anything but attach my name to a vast destruction. "When he tried to hold the monarchy back on the rapid slope he himself had launched it down, it was too late. "God makes the storm rumble, and then all of a sudden he gives us back the calm and the blue of the sky; so does not the hand of man, it, unleashes and can no longer hold back."[274]

Well, it was at the very moment when all these ruins were beginning and were about to pile up, when Mirabeau was dying inconsolable for having prepared them, that, on the one hand, the Assembly madly accepted the homage of Volney's book with its mournful title, and on the other, disregarding all precautions, it said to the Jews: Enter society!

They will indeed enter, but through immense rubble, and what rubble! No century has ever seen such rubble.

272 POUJOULAT, *la Révolution*, p. 225.

273 *Ibid*., pg 227.

274 POUJOULAT, *la Révolution*, p, 200,

III

Comparison with Israel's ancient entry into the Promised Land through the crumbling walls of Jericho. Differences between the two situations.

A parallel is also in order here:

France, giving way to the Jews through its crumbling institutions, reminds us of ancient Jericho, opening the gateway to the Promised Land for the children of Israel through its crumbling walls.

In Jericho, it was the material walls that crumbled; in France, it was the ramparts of institutions.

The Jews who entered Jericho had just emerged from the long captivity of Egypt; the Jews who enter French society have also just undergone an eighteen-year captivity among the nations.

Because this people is as vast as the world, and the most prodigious of all peoples, God allows an unparalleled crash for both entrances. For its entry into the Promised Land, it's the crash of city walls; for its entry into French society, it's the crash of the *ancien régime* and the Revolution.

These are the similarities, but here are the differences:

In Jericho, armed Canaanites guarded the walls, determined to defend themselves and repel any assault. Jericho," says the book of Judges, "was closed and well equipped. It took nothing less than an unprecedented miracle to bring victorious and ruthless Israel into the square. The Promised Land lay open, but at least, crushed under the walls, the defenders had done their duty.

The same cannot be said of what happened in 1791. The Constituent Assembly and the French people overturned their own defenses, their solid institutions, in front of the besieging Jews, and said to them, after having made the breach themselves: "Enter among us as citizens.

O generous but short-sighted France, have you not dismantled and surrendered yourself?

In Jericho, the rights of God went before Israel, with the sound of trumpets; in France, it's the rights of man, with the revolutionary

axe, that are clearing the way.

In Jericho, the miracle opened the breach; apostasy, alas! opens France. The people who entered Jericho were the people of God; while those who enter French society are the deicide people, still enemies of Jesus Christ.

IV

The providential aspect of that same day: a triple change in the existence of the old Hebrew people.

But is the horizon of this day of September 27, 1791 only what we have just recounted? Is it one of those days of which Scripture says that, because of their calamities and darkness, "the heavens are covered with sackcloth"?1 Let's beware of thinking so. Everything about the Jewish people is so vast and complex, so deep in the abyss of justice, yet so high in the heights of mercy, that one cannot reason about them in the same way as about other peoples. He's special: reasoning must be special for him.

One point of view has always struck us as singularly important in considering this poor, dear people, and that is their obligation to be useful to humankind, even in spite of its hatreds, even in spite of humankind's repugnance;

Indeed, because they were chosen to prepare and present Christ to the rest of mankind, they will be obliged to be of service until the end of time. This role of obligatory service will follow him even into the punishments he will have incurred. For example:

When he was deported and taken captive to Babylon, he became the missionary of Gentiles, and his Bible became known and propagated among the nations;

When the ruin of Jerusalem, his capital, is foretold by Christ as a punishment for his bloodthirsty unbelief, this ruin, already so terrible in itself, acquires even more solemn and instructive proportions, as it is linked, in the ternias that announce and describe it, to that of the end of the world;[275]

Does wrathful Providence scatter its members everywhere, as justice would do with an executed culprit, in this state it still serves as a profitable example for the salvation of souls and peoples;

In its dispersion, it even serves in another way. For, thrown into the universal, he has become the broker of all Nations. In times when relations were difficult or infrequent, Jews were the porters

275 Isaiah 1:3.

of peoples, carrying spices and fabrics on their shoulders from one country to another. What a contrast with the missionaries of the Catholic Church! It was said of them that magnificent word from the Bible: How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the one who preaches the good news, who preaches peace and salvation![276] It was said of the Jews: How useful on the mountains are the feet of the one who brings the goods!

So it's only fair to acknowledge that, even in their situation as guilty outcasts, the Jews were never able to avoid the obligation to be of service. Now, having admitted this, can we suppose that Providence, so attentive to the realization of this admirable strategy, allowed itself to be caught out at the time of one of the most serious phases of this people, that of its entry into the civil and intimate life of the Christian nations, and that the now famous day of September 27, 1791 does not contain, alongside the dark shades we have described, a clearing by which the inconveniences will be brought back and subjected sooner or later to the service of the human race? 11 It is impossible for us to accept only the dark shades; on the contrary, recalling the beautiful expression used by Saint Paul with regard to the wisdom of God, *multiformis sapientia Dei*,[277] we believe in the preparation of a dazzling triumph of this Wisdom, placing under its dependence the day of September 27TH, which began in such a gloomy manner.

M. de Bonald, who 'showed little tenderness for the Israelites in the writing that appreciates their emancipation, and in the words we have reported from him (p. 241-2), could not help being struck by a background to this day of September 27TH that his keen eye made him glimpse. The most respectable oracles of religion," he says in the same letter, "and the most ancient traditions, teach that the Jews must be called in their turn to the freedom of the children of God. And who knows whether philosophy, which seems to be the sole impetus, is not itself, in this revolution as in so many others, the blind instrument of the highest designs? For whenever a great question arises in society, we can be sure that a great motive is

276 Matthew 24; Luke 21.

277 Ephesians 3:10.

present, and that a great decision is not far off."[278]

It is this great providential decision that we salute! Leaving aside the dark hues we have impartially pointed out, we can also, as a sentinel of hope, make out white spots in the new situation that the day of September 27TH creates for Israel; we designate them as follows:

This people breaks the yoke;

They enter universal society for the first time;

It is mandated by Providence.

278 *Qeuvres de M. de Donald*, Mélanges, t. I, 376.

V

FIRST, THEY BREAK THE YOKE. WHAT YOKE?

Breaking the yoke.

There is a very ancient prophecy that has remained, one might say, forgotten in the world. The time has come, it seems, to bring it out of oblivion:

It was under the patriarchal eve. Isaac, now old and blind, had blessed Jacob, thinking he was blessing Esau. Esau had, moreover, sold Jacob his birthright and, consequently, the right to the blessing that was its first prerogative. Jacob, blessed, had scarcely left the patriarch's presence when Esau entered in his turn, returning from his hunt and counting on the blessing. We know his fury, and also Isaac's profound astonishment, "admiring," says the Sacred Book, "beyond all belief, what had happened, and saying: 'Your brother has received' my blessing, and he will remain blessed."

But let's let the Sacred Book speak for itself:

"Esau uttered a great cry mingled with tears, and said: 'Have you then, my father, but one blessing? I beseech you to bless me too.

"Isaac was touched and said: "Your blessing will be in the fat of the earth...

"But you shall serve your brother; I have made him your lord.

"And the old man added: "The time will come when you will shake off his yoke and free yourselves from it."[279]

Such is this ancient prophecy. Now here's how it came to pass:[280] a startling realization!

In Jacob taking the place of Esau, commentators have been

279 Genesis 37:33, 37, 38-40.

280 The first literal fulfillment of this prophecy came in the time of Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, under whom the Idumeans, descendants of Esau, became free and had a king of their own nation. During his reign, Edom shook off the yoke of Judah, so as to no longer be subject to it, and chose a king for himself... Edom withdrew from Judah and no longer wished to be subject to it, as it is no longer today (II King 8:20, 22). But this literal fulfillment at the time of Jora does not end the scope of the prophecy, which belongs to the group of prophecies with a double object, a double horizon. The explanation we present is the spiritual fulfillment of the prophecy.

unanimous in recognizing the Christian people taking the place of the Jewish people, who were the firstborn. The Christian people succeeded the Jewish people in their inheritance, in all their rights, and this because - just as Esau had sold and passed on his right to blessing - the Jewish people had delivered, passed on to the nations Jesus Christ, the source of all blessings: Christ will be delivered to the nations, it had been announced, *Tradetur gentibus*;[281] he was!...

What was the result? This:

Isaac, prophesying the fate of Esau - and consequently of the Jews - had said: You shall serve your brother. And yet, for eighteen centuries, have not the Jewish people been, to the letter, the servants of the Christian people? As noted in the previous paragraph, they were peddlers to the nations, bringing them the goods they needed on their backs. It's impossible not to recognize this historical contrast, this fact of banal obviousness: on the one hand, throughout the Middle Ages, the Christian people were, as it were, the sons of the house; on the other hand, the Jewish people were the servants, the subalterns, the serfs. Whatever his pride of race, the sincere Israelite will have the courage to confess: Israel has served the Christian people; I have made him your lord! So, like Esau, of whom it is said that he shuddered with anger, the Jewish people have never borne this yoke except by shuddering, with ill-concealed anger.

But the ancient prophecy had a remarkable conclusion, this one:

The patriarch, after having said: You will serve your brother, had added: And the time will come that you will shake off his yoke and deliver yourselves from it;

This time of deliverance came on September 27, 1791. When, by dint of shrewdness, detours, energy and perseverance, the Jews succeeded in wresting the decree of emancipation from the hesitant hands of the Constituent Assembly, on that day, they shook off the yoke, and delivered themselves from it. One of the oldest and most important prophecies was fulfilled, and no one was the wiser.

How deep and crushing God's purposes are! Here is a patriarch, now old and blind, who from the depths of his tent pitched in Canaan pronounces harsh and merciful words about his son Esau:

281 Luke 18:32.

and, while he thinks he is pronouncing only about Esau, the Spirit of truth, for whom the centuries are all present, dictates to the old man's lips an oracle that will reach into the last centuries: The time will come when you will shake off his yoke and deliver yourselves from it!

This breaking of the yoke resulted in an event of minor importance in itself, but highly significant. In our book *L'Entrée des Israélites dans la Société française*, we recounted the humiliating custom observed for five hundred years in Strasbourg against the Jews, which consisted in sounding the horn or trumpet from the cathedral belfry every evening: warned by these high-pitched sounds, Jews who had obtained permission to spend the day in Strasbourg would leave at dusk to go and sleep elsewhere.[282] Well, no sooner had the Constituent Assembly issued its decree than a small expeditionary force of Hebrews climbed the cathedral tower one evening, seized the famous horn and smashed it to pieces. From then on, the bellringer was never heard to utter the words: "Out with the Jews! The leader of the little troop had been Cerfberr's son.[283] This was the epilogue to the trial between Strasbourg and Louis XVI's protégé.

282 See *l'Entrée des Israélites dans la Société française*, Chapters 6 and 7 of Book I.

283 *Les Juifs à Strasbourg depuis 1349 jusqu'il la Révolution* by ISIDORE LOEB. (*Annuaire de la Société des études juives*, year 2, p. 175–6.)

VI

Secondly, it ceases its forty-year isolation, to become a member of universal society.

Breaking the yoke was, for the old people, the first result of this day; entering universal society was to be the second.

Strangely enough, this people - even though its role had been to be the world's reservoir, since it had provided the world with the Decalogue, the Scriptures and the Messiah - had always lived in isolation from the rest of the human race. Let the reader understand this isolation:

For the first two thousand years of its existence, from Abraham to Jesus Christ, the Jewish people had been carefully nurtured, but separately from the other nations: like the sons of a great family who receive a special and careful education. Palestine was their home, their enclosed garden; the prophets were their tutors. It was enjoined upon her: *You shall not marry the nations; you shall not give your daughters to their sons, and you shall not take their daughters for your sons.*[284] Thanks to this severe isolation, Israel was partly preserved from the monstrous errors of polytheism and idolatry; and when the Messiah came, he found intact in Israel's hands the dogma he needed to lead the world from particular to universal religion, from Judaism to Christianity: the dogma of the unity of God.

Such was the first isolation, an isolation of honor; it had lasted two thousand years.

With the Messiah, the Jewish people, no less than the true religion of which it was the guardian, was to pass from the particular to the universal, and from its isolation of honor to the common life of peoples. Jewish history, which had hitherto had only obligatory points of contact with the nations, was to expand and enter into a gentle and magnificent conjunction with universal history. But this was not to be. The Jewish people, jealous of their own race and privileges, refused to make common cause with the rest of mankind, and killed the Messiah who had come to open his arms to all peoples.

284 Deuteronomy 7:3.

Then Israel's isolation began again, but this time it was no longer the isolation of honor, as in Palestine; it was a penal isolation, in the very midst of the nations: Israel no longer resembled a prince's son carefully raised apart, it was the guilty parked away like a convict.

This new isolation, in turn, lasted for almost another two thousand years. Indeed, though scattered and scattered everywhere among the nations, the Jews everywhere remained separated from the rest of mankind. For them, narrow, dark alleyways had replaced the noble Palestinian homes of their ancestors. On the one hand, the prescriptions of the Talmud, full of spite and pride, forced them to keep themselves apart from the nations, in these alleys. But, on the other hand, the Christian nations, in the process of being formed, had not wanted to admit, at any price, into their midst these men hostile to their Christian constitution, these unconstitutional men. A formidable line of demarcation had thus been established between society and the Jews. A particular costume made them immediately recognizable; prohibitions of all kinds prevented them from mingling with the crowd; and countless exceptional laws prevented them from approaching society from any point, which stood before them like a veritable fortress. Ah! how the tables were turned! The Jews, when they possessed Palestine, had not wanted, at the time when the Messiah presented himself as a sublime hyphen, to mix with the nations: and the nations, in their turn, did not care to mix with them for eighteen centuries. And so, to sum up:

Two thousand years of isolation in Palestine, isolation of honor;

Another two thousand years of isolation among the nations, penal isolation;

A total of four thousand years of isolation: such had been the prodigious state of this people, without example in the annals of mankind.

The decree of September 27, 1791 put an end to this desert-like isolation;

This people was about to be mixed with the rest of the world, for the last destinies of society.

Comte de Maistre once said: *The Revolution is not an event, it's an epoch*. A profoundly true statement, and, in particular, with regard

to this old people emerging from its isolation of forty centuries to finally enter, in 1791, into French and universal society: wasn't it an epoch? An imperishable ferment, it was about to be mixed with the world, like leaven. Will it be for good or for evil, for life or for death?

We answer, raising our eyes to heaven as we write: for life!

VII

THIRDLY, IT IS MANDATED BY PROVIDENCE.

Indeed, let us meditate on M. de Bonald's reflection, quoted above: "The most respectable oracles of Religion and the most ancient traditions teach that the Jews must be called in their turn to the freedom of the children of God. And who knows whether philosophy, which seems to be the sole impetus of minds, is not itself, in this revolution as in so many others, the blind instrument of higher designs?"

Philosophy, the blind instrument of higher designs! In a striking phrase, M. de Bonald said the last word on the Jewish question before the Constituent Assembly. This Assembly, superbly philosophical, has, on the one hand, sent Jesus Christ away, and, on the other, let the Jews in: Providence, outraged by this contrast, has let it happen; but accustomed to drawing good from evil, it says: Bring me this people;

This is not a call to the Jews; it is merely a command to them.

There is a text from the prophet Isaiah, the interpretation of which is disputed between justice and mercy: Bring out a people who are blind, though they have eyes; who are deaf, though they have ears.[285]

Some commentators believe that it is indignant justice which dictates this language to the prophet: "Send out", i.e. drive out of the assembly of the children of God a people who do not deserve to be there, because they are blind, even though they have eyes, and deaf, even though they have ears. This interpretation is just and justified.[286] In fact, throughout the nineteen centuries of Christianity, Christian kings and Pontiffs have ensured that the dangerous beings mentioned by the prophet were kept away.

But there is another, equally true interpretation according to mercy: Bring them out, in the sense of bring me;[287] bring them out

285 Isaiah 43:8.

286 The main exponents of this interpretation are Jerome and Theoloret. (See Cornelius La Pierre, *Commentaires sur Isaïe*, Chapter 43.)

287 This interpretation is developed by Duguet, in eloquent and touching terms, in his *Traité des principes de la foi chrétienne*, Part II, Chapter XVI. - It is perfectly supportable, for among the? different meanings given to the mag-

of their separate quarters, their dark alleys, where they were parked;

This interpretation finds its justification in the day of September 27, 1791: indeed, here they come out!

But who is bringing them out? For they are still blind and deaf, and the order given by Providence to bring them out is addressed to a third party;

At the bottom of the emancipatory decree issued by the Constituent Assembly on September 27, there are two names (please reread this decree, p. 245-6):

Louis XVI's name;

There is also that of the Jacobin Duport;

With Louis XVI, it was Christianity that guided the deaf and blind old people from their segregated quarters to Providence. The Christian monarch had undertaken this exit, and the march had begun when, all of a sudden, the Revolution, through Jacobinism, took the place of royal action, and it was in fact Jacobin Duport who brought them about!

In our first work on the Entry of the Israelites, we put forward this thought: that Hell, when it suspects that the time of mercy for the remnants of Israel is approaching, will endeavor to render these remnants unfit for God's purposes;[288]

It was on this day, September 2, that his infernal interposition began to shine forth with terrible brilliance. Providence had given the order to bring the old people out of their isolation. One might have hoped that either a Sovereign Pontiff or, at least, a very Christian king would have been led by circumstances to take the lead in such a fine movement; but no, it is the satanic Revolution that comes to say to Providence, with a sneer that is not imaginary: It is I who bring them to you! And you'll use them, if you can, after they've gone through the education I'll give them...

O divine and inscrutable Providence, you accept these blind and deaf volunteers with their spirit hostile to the Church, you accept them from the hands of the Revolution, which brings them. But one

nificent forty-third chapter of Isaiah is that of the conversion of the Jews, and Duzuet's interpretation ties in very well with the context.

288 *L'Entrée des Israélite*s, p. 300, 303-4.

day the world will realize that it is not to you, O divine Providence, but to the impious Revolution that was reserved this immense disappointment which closes all the undertakings of the Spirit of Darkness: Erravimus,[289] we were mistaken in emancipating them!

289 *Wisdom* 5:6.

VIII

Eternal thanks to France for having been the instrument of this transformation.

As an Israelite turned Catholic, deeply devoted to both religious and historical truth, we have had to judge severely the period from 1789 to 1791, deploring the pride of an Assembly which, idolizing human reason, wanted to start society anew outside Christianity; deploring, reproving the sacrilegious exaltation of the rights of man over the abasement of the rights of God; deploring, reproving a thousand times over the particularly painful coincidence of the dismissal of Jesus Christ and the recall of the Jews.

From this point of view, no thanks can be given to the legislators of 1791: they would have been better off sparing Jesus Christ and leaving us in our back alleys!

But, putting aside the clouds of revolutionary impiety, gratitude is allowed to go straight to the heart of France; and then, thank you, oh thank you to that heart which was the merciful instrument of our deliverance and rehabilitation!

O France, you may have been the victim of fatal errors and committed great faults; but there are magnanimous resolutions that only you dare to conceive, selfless undertakings that only you are in a position to accomplish. Only you can, on a certain day, take up the common cause and fight for it. You alone have delivered the oppressed!... Like a battered boatman on the ocean of centuries, the unfortunate, trembling Jew could land nowhere. But one day, you said: Have mercy. At that moment he cried out: Earth, earth, until he cried out: Jesus! Jesus!

O France, if, at different times in your history, you have banished us from your land, you have also been, for us, the first smile of long-suffering Providence, which at last drops its wrath. It is you whom it has charged with announcing peace to the humiliated remnants of Jacob; it is you perhaps whom it will charge with recalling them one day from all points of the dispersion! In your

land, then, the poor wandering Jew has received permission to halt his wandering march; and it is in your bosom that he has found that fixed something which bears that sweet name: A home! Thanks, then, to you, O noble land of France; and thanks to you, children of France, who, first among all peoples, have stretched out their hand to us, who have looked upon us as men, and who have told us to sit down and make our home with you. Ah! if the pilgrim's prayer and blessing always bring good fortune, O France, our blessing, the blessing of the pilgrim of the centuries, is upon you... On you, so that your families and your cities may once again prosper; on you, so that God may deliver you from all inner evil, and reward you for having loved us; on you, so that in your turn, for the home you have given us, you may remain, O France, you may never disappear, but remain; and may this saying of a freedman like us be true to the end of the centuries: Every man has two homelands: his own, and France![290]

290 It was pronounced by Jefferson as he left the shores of France after obtaining recognition of American independence from Louis XVI.